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THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
CLASS OF 1882
OF NEW YORK

1918



3

WALTHEOF;

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

PRODUCED AT
THE ROYAL SURREY THEATRE,
Monday, March 17, 1851.

PUBLISHED BY JOHN TALLIS AND COMPANY,
LONDON AND NEW YORK.

1851.

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FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
1918**

[All applications respecting the acting of this Play in the
Provinces, are to be made to MR. CRESWICK, at the *Royal
Surrey Theatre*, London.]

W A L T H E O F.

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS.

PERSONS REPRESENTED.

WALTHEOF, <i>Earl of Huntingdon</i>	Saxons.	MR. CRESWICK.
EDWIN		MR. MONTAGUE.
MORCAR		MR. PONISI.
CERDIC		MR. MEAD.
EGBERT, <i>An old retainer of Waltheof</i>		MR. FITZROY.
EDRED, <i>Esquire to Waltheof</i>	Normans.	MISS H. COVENEY.
DE GUADER, <i>Earl of Norfolk</i>		MR. PARRY.
FITZ-OSBORNE, <i>Friend of De Guader</i>		MR. MORTIMER.
WARRENNE, <i>Earl of Surrey</i>		MR. B. NORTON.
GRANTMESNEL, <i>Earl of Chester</i>		MR. COLLIER.
FRETHERIC, <i>Bishop of Ely</i>		MR. BUTLER.
GURLOIS, <i>A British slave, son to Guiniver</i>		MR. RAYMOND.
SOLDIER		MR. YOUNG.
JUDITH, <i>Wife of Waltheof, and niece to William the Conqueror</i>		MISS COOPER.
ADELA, <i>Wife of De Guader, and Ward of William</i>		MISS J. COVENEY.
GUINIVER, <i>British Weird Woman</i>		MRS. H. B. RIGNOLD.
ATTENDANT		MISS GREGORY.

Knights, Esquires, Troops, &c. &c. &c.

Date, 1072. Period of action, about three days.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Early Morning. Wild Wood Scene.*

GUINIVER *discovered sitting at the foot of an oak, c.*

Guin. My days of thought have gender'd sleepless nights.—
[Comes forward.] I have outwatch'd the stars, and from their
 globes
 Of dazzling light, methought I voices heard,
 That shouted "Vengeance!" "Vengeance!" Guiniver!
 And when I heed ye not, prophetic fires,
 Look down with scorn on me.
 A step! My son!

Enter GURLOIS, R.

Gur. Mother!

Guin. My boy!

Gur. The Norman lord —

Guin. Hath wed the Norman dame. 'Tis so!

The wild winds whisper'd it, when yesternight,
The flaming lightning rived to rugged splints
This Druid oak, whose tough and massive boughs,
Had grappled with the storms for centuries.

Gur. Thou smil'st, I have not seen a smile upon
Thy lip, since Harold fell.

Guin. It is a flash
Shall herald in a storm. Now speak thy news.

Gur. My news ! what news is pleasant to a Briton's ear,
Save when he tells himself, that he must die ?
When did he last hear music in a voice ?

Guin. Yon heart-sick girl, in breath that would not stir
A feather's calm, hath murmur'd vows, shall raise
A hurricane to shake down bearded men :
There's music for thee, boy !

Gug. We have waited, mother —

Guin. But for our time.—

The curse hath been upon our native land,
Since when the Roman Cæsar's galleys broke
Their golden beaks upon our sea-worn cliffs,
The Scot, the Pict, the Saxon hordes, who slew
Our sotted Vortigern, Rowena's toy.
The ruthless Dane, the Norman clad in steel,
All came—all saw—and then, all conquer'd us.
And I, descended from a line of kings,
Whose blood was princely, ere these northern wolves
Had burst their ice-ribb'd seas, am but —

Gur. A slave !

Guin. And I have lived, to hear myself so call'd,
And by my son ! I am a British slave !
The earth is rank with our dead countrymen.
They sleep, and unreveng'd ; while o'er their graves,
Contending men, cry havoc ! for their homes.
But I —

Gur. But thou art old—

Guin. No, not so old

But I remember that—I had a boy—
A fair-hair'd boy, who, with his prattle, made
With thee, my native woods a paradise.

Gur. But thou art grey, leave this to younger arms.

Guin. And blunter wit. 'Tis true, I have grown grey,
But greedy time, that stole the gloss away
From my hair's raven hue, and silver'd it,
Hath not o'erthrown my mind, nor quench'd its fire.
Have not I traffick'd with soul-blasting charms ?
Pluck'd spiced herbs, and such as hold within
Their freckled cups, the newly poison'd dew ?
Have not I sought for all forbidden things—
"Wild spells, that shake the strong-built firmament ?

Gur. Thou hast—

Guin. I have! Yes boy, for what? Revenge!

Gur. [*Passionately laying his hand on his dagger.*] Mother!

Guin. Let daggers rest! What's one poor life?

Had daggers aided me, think'st mine had slept?

I have been branded as a foul-birth'd witch,

Have seen young children tremble at my gaze,

And old men cross themselves: at every turn

Th' averted eye—the finger shook in scorn—

And I have borne them all: again—for what?

Gur. Revenge!

Guin. And we shall have revenge:

List, boy—the Bastard is in Normandy,

The Norman barons, and the Saxon thanes

Have met as friends: they now conspire to shake

The new rais'd throne. I have my work to do.

The wolf and dog shall meet; then perish both!

Away to Warrenne with this welcome news;

He hates this Waltheof, and but bides his time,

To strike him headlong from his lofty height.

Away!

Gur. Where next we meet?

Guin. Here.

Gur. When?

Guin. To-night!

[*Crosses to R.*]

See yonder cloud that frowns above the sun:

The blast sleeps there, and blinding lightning lies

Lapp'd in the thunder's fold: look on it, boy!

Before the spirit's hand, with whirlwind arm'd,

Shall dash the tempest forth, the earth shall teem

With Saxon, Norman blood! Foe meets with foe!

See, on the plain, the Britons' masters meet!

My curse is there, and plays around each helm—

Guides every sword, points every arrow, lance!

On! on, again! the field with crimson flows!

On! on! Ha! ha! ha! the fiend of battle shouts!—

There is no living quarry for his lust. [*Exit Guin. R. Gur. L.*]

SCENE II.—*A noble Saxon Hall, in the Castle of Waltheof.*

The Marriage of DE GUADER and ADELA just concluded.

WALTHEOF, EDWIN, CERDIC, MORCAR, FRETHERIC, DE
GUADER, FITZ OSBORNE. (*Trumpet.*)

Fre. Peace be with Norfolk, and his peerless bride,

And love with fruitful intercourse; and all

The healthful joys, that dance attendance on

The marriage bed, leading to happiness.

[*All drink.*]

Cer. But by my life, this hasty marriage held

In bold opposing to the Bastard's law,
Will raise a storm, we must, by times o'er-rule,
Or it will sweep us headlong from its path.

Edw. Then gentler joys farewell!

The trumpet tongue of noble war must drown
The silver cymbals of short summer'd peace.

Cer. [*Rising.*] And welcome it. That smooth-paced palfrey
"peace,"

Hath too long ambled o'er our native land,

[*Comes forward. Edw. and Mor. rise.*]

Oh! I could gnaw my very flesh to think,
That we, whose fathers won this crag-girt land,
And kept it 'gainst a world—like cowards crouch
Before these robbers—who, with steel clad breasts —

Mor. [*Aside to Cer.*] Bethink you noble Thane—the Nor-
mans there—[*Edred and Attendants retire, R. and*

L. c. The guests forming groups, R. and L.]

Cer. [*c.*] Bid me crouch too! [*De Gua., Fre. and Fitz-Os.*
come forward.] Oh! but—I did forget:—

Nobles—gentlemen—I pray you pardon me:

I have a deeper-seated injury,

Than man e'er had who spoke it tenderly.

De Gua. [*L. c.*] My charger hath not breath'd an acre since
Matilda's tournament at Pevensey.

Edw. [*R. c.*] Thy horse shall breathe.—

The bastard, lapp'd in pleasant Normandy,
Yields fair occasion for our purposes.

Cer. [*c.*] And we lay hold on't.

Fitz-Osborne, Norfolk you, both deeply wrong'd

By him, whom ye had ably help'd to climb

The lofty eyrie of the English throne,

Have sworn to back our noble enterprize—

De Gua. He scorn'd my suit. I kneel'd to him;—once more

He did refuse. I told him of our loves:

He smil'd:—how I had fought for him: again

He smiled; bled for him: gods! he smil'd again!

And when I press'd my suit, he vow'd that I

"Was troublesome!" and, "Adela," quoth he,

And then he stopp'd and frown'd, "Wives not with thee,"

And—so he left me.

Fitz-Os. He was no true prophet then.

De Gua. 'Tis but an hour I have wedded one

Whose charms have made me most in love with peace.

Her I forego: her arms: her smiles of joy!

'Till my good blade hath writ receipt for all

Mine injuries. My life, my love, my hopes,

On this one stake I cast. Glove, sword, and heart,

My fortune and my followers.

Fitz-Os. And mine.

Mor. And mine.

Cer. So all !

Fre. [L.] Save Waltheof !

Edw. Beneath his silence lies a deep resolve,
The stanchest hounds ne'er wake the welkin up
Until the game's afoot—then, hark for music.

Fitz-Os. What ! Waltheof !

De Gua. Dreamest thou ?

Walt. No—— !

Cer. Thou hast a country, Waltheof !

Walt. I had !

Cer. Still hast.

Alas ! poor country ! when her foremost son
Turns traitor to her dearest interests.

Walt. I am no traitor, Cerdic.

Your secret's mine, and safe as with yourselves.

I love ye, think with ye, but join ye not.

And yet, I am no traitor, gentlemen.

Hath he not rain'd on me his royal love :

Heap'd on me honours with unsparing hand :

And favour'd me above his countrymen ?

Edw. As man, he is thy friend ; as tyrant, foe ;

While righting thee, he wrong'd thy country most.

The robber fed thee, but with rifled spoils.

Walt. He conquer'd,—could have slain,—but pardon'd me ;

And to my keeping gave the rarest gem

That grac'd his state ; which set mid my rude clay,

Made priceless what was valueless before.

De Gua. 'Twas policy.

Walt. Policy !

It made me happy ;—and, I asked no more.

Cer. [L. c.] Art thou afraid to die ?

Edw. [R. c.] No !—on my life !

Walt. [c.] I thank thee, Edwin. It was ever thus—

The tongue that slander'd me, found thee its foe.

'Tis not this outward shell for which I carp.

That, at the best, hath but a few years' wear,

'Tis not the case, but pearl it cabinets—

'Tis not mine outward man, but inward honour.

The first's a foam flake, plaything for a breeze.

The second is a rock for blasts to batter at,

And yet not shake.

Edw. Thou art ambitious to be honourable.

What honour greater than to aid the land

That gave thee birth ? What honour nobler than

To die for it ? What hate more lawful than

The hate that thou shouldst bear its conqueror ?

Walt. None ! My country hath my prayers, my love, my heart ;

My heart's best blood, could that but ransom it.

My father's sword is glued within its sheath

By sacred gratitude.

[Retires and sits.]

Cer. Now by mine ancestors, I stand amazed!

Is he a god, or current in his veins

All Saxon blood, that we should court him thus?

Let every man be chief, him chiefest who,

With helmless brow shall deepest plough within

The Norman ranks. Let spiders weave their webs

Within his helm; his unback'd war-horse chafe.

Leave him at home to nurse his gratitude. [Crosses to R.]

Fre. Thy words might call thy father back to claim

His sword again,

Cer. Why, what a rout is here with gratitude!

Is that the only duty of thy life?

Mor. Up! Up! for shame.

Edw. Let not thy purpose crouch,

As beaten hound, before the lash of doubt.

Walt. [Starting up.] Wouldst have me slay my wife?

Cer. If it would save

Thy country—aye!

Walt. That were a Roman act.

Cer. And wherefore not a Saxon?

Edw. Thus Brutus did!

Walt. He did not slay his wife! And, yet, he did.

Slew all; wife, master, friend; and slaying them,

He also slew himself. For prosper'd he?

Look back through history, and find me, Sirs,

A hand that hath not *wither'd* when it struck

Anointed kings.

De Gua. If thou 'rt afraid to strike,

Leave then the task to me.

Walt. Norman!

De Gua. Pardon!

I did but gall, to prove the mettled steed.

Edw. Waltheof—

Walt. I may not hear thee. [*Cer. and party retire, the rest, who have been observing the passing dialogue, join them.*]

Edw. Thou wilt! Nay, shalt.

From early youth, we two were knit by bonds,

The busy world pronounc'd unbreakable.

We had one wish, one thought, one common aim.

Walt. We had—we have.

Edw. We had, till thou wast wed;

Then private love o'ercame thy public hate;

Though worthy love, it is a selfish joy,

Which thou hast set against the bitter wrongs

That crush the hearts of all thy countrymen.

Thou art happy—but hapless all beside.

And thou art right. What is 't to thee? Oh! bleed,

My countrymen! Your chiefest man has—what?

A wife! Is bless'd! and therefore rest ye slaves!

Walt. No more! no more! Thou 'st waked me from a dream,

[*All advance.*] That waking, sleeping, ne'er will come again!

Thou 'st touch'd a note thou knewest would respond;

The master-key was in the master-hand.

Oh! thou hast set my country 'gainst my wife,

My country's wrongs against my gratitude.

As lesser virtues are but feeble stars,

That faint before the suns of nobler ones,

So gentle love, and peerless gratitude

Must fade before the brighter, broader flame

That lights a patriot's soul! And be it so.

Cer. [*Taking Waltheof's hand.*] That 's nobly said.

Walt. And would 'twere nobly done.

We shall not prosper, Frætheric!

Ingratitude's a whip that goads us on

To our perdition. We shall not prosper, Edwin.

Edw. When deep-browed clouds are frowning o'er the earth,

Canst point me out where shines the northern star?

Canst look into a rock, and tell me where

The hidden waters madden for a leap?

Fre. If so, thou canst our morrow's venture read.

Cer. Who doubts of morrows? Fight we not as one?

And one of manies made, is 't not invincible?

To-morrow *must* be ours? Who doubts must fear.

Who fears, out on 't, is not his scabbard's worth.

De Gua. Upon our swords let 's swear. [*They all draw.*]

Walt. Stay!

What honour holds not binding, all our oaths

Would treat as jests. If inbred faith will not

Cement this enterprise, strong oaths are air,

And vaunted resolution spring-tide ice.

A freeman's cause is its own sacrament,

Who swears to it but adds a feeble voice

Unto the full-toned music of the soul.

Oaths are the weapons that a coward wields,

The froth that tells the water's shallowness.

Shrine in your hearts the will "to do or die."

Give not that devil doubt a place to lurk.

Clasp but mine hand—thus—thus—there is no oath

That tongue e'er forged hath half such depth in it.

Oh! give me palmistry to read the heart.

Edw. Now can I glory when I call thee friend.

Walt. And should I wrong ye; stain mine honesty,

That evil fall on me, that blight of shame

Which good men pray against—a memory

Of scorn—then link my name with his who curs'd,

In his disloyalty, betray'd the earth's
One paragon! Now, leave me; I pray you leave me.

Cer. To don thine armour, and collect thy strength.

*We are prepared for battle, and will play
The gap 'twixt then and now with hawk and hound.
And look ye, sir, my golden bracelet I
Will set against your knightly basinet,
That not a wing that fans the air this day,
Shall swoop so sure as will my Saxon hawk.*

De Gua. 'Tis done.

Cer. That's well: and let the falcon's flight
Foretell the issue of the coming strife
When Saxon breast and Saxon sword shall match
With Norman steel, with Norman shield and brand.

[*Exeunt all but Walt., through c. and off a. s.*]

Walt. [*Solus.*] There is a discord in my brain:—a doubt
That hath bewilder'd all its harmony!—
But, hence ye tender thoughts that sit enthron'd
Like loving seraphs on the peaceful heart:—
Give place to such as will not bear a name. [*Horns without.*]
What! Ho! [*Attendants armed for the chase, with hawks,
spears, &c. cross from L. to R.*]

Egb. My lord! *Enter EGBERT, L.*

Walt. Once more old Egbert: ever when I call'd,
Thou wert the first afoot.

Egb. Oh! good my gracious lord,
Age hath not murder'd love, but frosted it—
And made it mellow; when I come not—
And Waltheof call, then deem old Egbert gone,
Where that, the voice of man, can never reach.

[*Kisses Waltheof's hand.*]

Walt. [*Aside.*] These tears shame me!
Old man, there is an after life to live,
Where I may thank thee;—here, human love,
By human word, is ill express'd.—Away! [*Horns cease.*]

Egb. My lord!

Walt. Once more, good Egbert, bring me forth my shield—
You kept my boyhood's plaything bright for me.
Collect my followers—for so you did
For him who call'd me son: see ably stor'd
My castle's hold!—the truest men and best,
Place on the walls—call in the scouts—'bove all
See thou it done—I trust no care but thine—
My father and his sire—both said as much.

Egb. Their son could say no more—'Tis done, my lord:—
Will can do more than strength or ablest youth. [*Exit, L.*]

Walt. What have I done?—I dare not dwell on it.
Had not I wrongs, which leap to frenzy when

think o' them, I should not dare to front
 That angel smile, which with its loveliness
 Makes my ingratitude appear more damn'd. [*Distant shouts.*]
 O knit my powers too—my country's griefs—
 With men whose thoughts are bounded by revenge
 That brings a curse upon that country's cause—
 [a!—my wife— [*Sound of shouting without, Trumpets, &c.*
he goes up.]

Enter JUDITH L.

Jud. What hast thou done? Thou hast not thrown aside,
 As valueless, the jewel of my love,
 Once worn and prized. Thou hast not joined these bold,
 Rebellious men, who seek to shake a throne,
 They peril'd all to raise.

Walt. Sweet wife, I have.

Jud. Thou must not.

Walt. Sweet wife, I must.
 Be thou content, I have empawn'd mine honour.

Jud. And where's the honour thou hast pawn'd to me;
 'To him, who gave me thee, and who, upon
 The battle-field, breath'd pardon and reward?
 If I, in humbleness, may say as much,—
 He might have slain thee, Waltheof!

Walt. Aye—would he had!—

Jud. His weapon then—less cruel than thy words.

Walt. Yet no! why wish for death—when living, I
 May play a part will yield eternity.

For good deeds never fade—and good men never die.

Jud. Shut out such thoughts, let futures outdo pasts,
 Let what may be, outbid the what hath been.

Shake not, brave oak, or I, the loving vine,
 Whose prop thou art, must fall and wither too:

Walt. My Judith, when the good tree's heart is charr'd,
 How soon its branches rot beside its leaves.

Thou art but clinging to a very slave.

Jud. Thou art no slave. Thou lookest like no slave!

The noblest minds are ever best content
 To bear control. Affection scorneth all
 Those harsher terms of "master," "slave," and for
 Such captious words, writes "friend." Thou art no slave.
 And if a slave—which thou shall die, ere be—
 What service is one arm?—What loss one sword?

Walt. My sword? No more than is the meanest hind's.
 Example 'tis—and this should greatness show
 To lowliness. For did each man withhold,
 Where then would stand the phalanx of the free?
 And should one beam refuse to shine, because
 Alone it could not light a world: or should
 One drop of rain refuse to fall, because

It could not form a foaming river's stream,
Where would be light, or food, or all that's here
Of good and beautiful? *I* may not free
My father-land: but by example *I*
May raise up men who will perform the task.

Jud. This is ambition's dream: the fickle throne,
Whose steps to atoms crumble 'neath the foot.
The throne is reached, and then, that crumbles too.
It is a story told,
Whose moral signifies, a death to peace.

Walt. Ambition rightly aim'd, is man's best ornament.

Jud. The world's ambition, woman's private woe.
The laurel dazzles *you*, its berry poisons *us*.
It is a step-dame, who, imperious,
Thrusts forth that child of elder birth, old love,
To perish!

Walt. Man, living for himself's a blot.

Jud. Himself! You live for me!

This is all new to me, but yesterday
Thou wast a bold, rough Saxon nobleman,
Thine answer "yea" or "nay," thine argument
The sword. To-day thou'rt full of subtleties,
Strange metaphors! What causes this?

Walt. A word—

Jud. That word?

Walt. Liberty!

Jud. A dream—

Walt. And I would not awake.

Jud. Thou art upon a path more dangerous,
Than is a sailor on an unknown sea.

No pilot yet, hath found that safer track,
By which to murder kings: why start? 'Tis so!

Walt. Because in seeking right, we chance to fall,
Should therefore right, be never travell'd for?
And should I die, another fills my place;
If this great earth should vanish from all space,
Would any of those lamps that gild the night,
E'er miss it from its sphere?

Jud. Yes, Waltheof, the moon that borrows light from her!
Thou wilt not raise thine arm, my Waltheof,
'Gainst him, who made so proud a wife of me.
He is my father's brother!

Walt. He is thy husband's country's foe; therefore
Thine enemy.

My countrymen appeal to me for right;
The noblest, best, are slaves, and led about
As curious beasts, to feed the scornful eyes
Of Norman multitudes. Mine honest rage
Hath now broke through those fancy-wreathed chains,

Call'd loyalty ; which men may forge or break,
As kings to king-makers are fair or foul,
As kings to king-keepers, are true or false ! [Crosses to R.]

Jud. Be calm, my Waltheof !

Walt. Bid mountain cataracts like brooklets flow—
Upon the pyre of this oppress'd land,
I dedicate myself : if sacrific'd
I have not died in vain : the good tree falls,
But from its rotting arms, springs nourishment,
To feed a thousand seeds. Yes, Judith, yes—
There's glory in such death ! [Crosses to R.]

Jud. Cease ! cease !

I am thy wife, and thou art conscience-thron'd,
And to such mighty majesty I bend ;
Go, Waltheof, and on this loving kiss,
Come all prosperity. A tear ! Forgive it—
I'll not offend again : it would o'erflow.
The fount was full, and so it bubbled up.
It is the last—for tears and I must learn
To say Farewell ! Farewell ! and, now, depart !
Yet—not to night—for I must school my tongue
To that—which on the morrow spoke—will break
My heart.—Fill all the gap, 'twixt then and now,
With these "Farewells"—and I shall weep upon
The saying them—Farewell ! [Exit, L. C.]

Walt. Farewell ! Who never spoke that word
To one he lov'd, hath yet to learn the tongue
Is rooted in the heart ! Farewell—the sun
In all his course sees nought so exquisite.
Farewell ! Now war with all its noble pomp
Will banish from my breast these home-bred joys.
Away ! I have no space for vain dispute
With halting reason, which the giant shade
Of grim misfortune sees upon the path
Which I must tread.
Come what may come—I bear me like a man,
And dash foreboding from my busy brain
As I would dash a poison from my lip. [Exit, L. C.]

Enter DE GUADER, EDWIN, ADELA, R. C.

Adel. [R. from L. C.] What ! but now wed, and ere my vows
are cold,

Leave me to sigh in cheerless widowhood.
What ! make my wedding day my weeping day ?
Fair lord, an' loved I not the name of wife :
Loved not this little golden fetter here,
I'd give it thee to ring thy lance's point.

De Gua. [C.] Aid me Edwin ; I have no argument
To mate her simple "stay."

Edw. [L.] There is a bitter sweet—called patience,
The sickly mind's best medicine.

Ade. [R.] Patience!
Was ever lady so misus'd, or knight so false?
To leave me thus: my smiles for battle's frowns;
The couch for heather beds, and banquet halls
For tents, or those cold coverlets the skies.

Edw. Thy grief is young, fair Adela;
When its sharp edge is worn away by time,
Then wilt thou smile, to think how thou didst weep.

Ade. Oh! comforters most rare! who heap on me
These time-worn adages! Ah! fool that I should weep.

De Gua. Weep not, unless for joy. Pr'ythee weep not.
Past pains, in gayer times, are themes for smiles.

Edw. He will return.

Ade. I know not that, the swords
Of kings are keen, and care no more for love,
Than love for arguments, who laugh at words,
At word-wise comforters. It is, "I will"—and so he dies.

De Gua. This music, Edwin, hath nigh melted me.

Edw. [Aside to him.] Had Waltheof not his music too?

Ade. These pleasant words are daggers silver'd o'er,
Which kill as surely as will naked steel.

So many years thou'st been my playfellow,
So many years thou'st been my champion,
My spokesman, shield, that now when I would speak,
Most wanting words, I can but whisper, "Stay."

Edw. Ere thou wert wed thou knew'st the consequence.

Ade. Excellently school'd! I have wed against
The will of him who had no right to speak
His "Yea," or "Nay." He'd give me leave to choose
A horse, a hound, a hawk, perhaps a robe,
A husband! [sooth, he'd choose me that myself.
Oh! love; beware this Conqueror, for he
Is stern of heart, large of build, and—

Enter WALTHEOF and JUDITH, L. C.

Jud. Blood matches bone; the gallant falcon strikes
The heron down, the hound the antler'd stag.

My Waltheof against this Conqueror!
Come weeping still, thy sorrow is but young.

My tears are dried! [Crosses to Ade.]

Ade. Does age, my Judith, make
Us weep for minutes, what, in younger times,
We had for hours wept. I'd sooner die
At early dawn, with life's fresh dew on me,
Than live till noon, and feel the burning glare
Of time had dried these founts of love in me!
These are young tears—we'll call them so—I sham'd
Not in the weeping, gentlemen.

Jud. [*Aside. Crosses to L.*] Alas!
 Come Adela, let's to our woman's toil,
 And work the pennons for these noble knights
 Who set their country 'bove their foolish wives.
 If we should mar our work, they'll say, a tear
 Had blinded us, and so will pardon us.
 Come, weeping still! Now shame on thee; thy tears
 Betray the very woman that thou art.
 Come! [*Exeunt, L., followed by all but Walt. & Edw., L. D.*]

Walt. How very dear must country, Edwin, be,
 When such as they can't win us from her arms.

Edw. I never had, since my first greenest years,
 When I did love a rose, kill'd i' the bud,
 A mistress save my country. I shall die
 In my good faith; no second love have I.

Walt. We must shake off these vain corroding thoughts
 That eat away the heart's most noble fruits.
 What, ho! without!

Enter EGBERT.

The armour that I wore
 At Pevensey. My father's sword, my lance,
 And battleaxe; be all as bright as is
 The honour of my wife. Ere yet the lark
 Shall shake his pinion in the morning sun,
 Wake up the welkin with my trumpet's bray.

Egb. It shall be done, my lord; and, once again,
 This arm may fight for Waltheof!

Walt. Springest thou,
 Thou good old bow, to send another shaft?
 Spare the cup to-night, it lost us Hastings.
 Let bills and brands be bright, and yew-bows tough,
 Clear strings, yard-shafts—behind them hearts of fire.

Egb. It shall be done. [*Exit, L. H.*]

Walt. To-morrow's sun shall smile upon our fame,
 Or set upon our graves. One last fond kiss
 To blush my lady's cheek. One prayer on high;
 Then fling abroad my banner to the breeze;
 Neigh steed! Shout, knave! Ring stirrup, sword and lance.
 My war-cry then, Set on! and Waltheof! [*Exeunt, L.*]

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A Chamber in the Castle.

JUDITH discovered sitting.

Jud. I said "no tears," and yet I weep!—Oh! shame,
 That I should be so eloquent in grief,
 Betraying thus that I am nature stamp'd
 A very woman: yet we women are
 Most apt to play the misers with our griefs,

And let the canker eat, untold away.
[Rises.] I've heard that drowning men will clutch at straws,
 At dimpling rings that whirl upon the pool:—
 And I, as desperate, have quite forgot
 That human aid when we would summon it,
 To tell us what *will* be—is powerless as these!
 Who comes?

Enter ATTENDANT, R.

Atten. The British weird woman, my lady. The Virgin
 Shield me: she scowled on me, as, terrified, I
 Shrank from her.

Jud. Bid her enter.

[Exit Atten.]

And why so anxious thus to tamper with
 Forbidden things? And why so fain to pry
 Beneath Time's veil to read the yeas and nays
 Of wisely hid futurity.

Enter GUINIVER, R.

There is a stamp upon her time-worn brow
 That tells of struggles—passions! but if good
 Or ill, surpasseth my weak sense. How like
 A noble ruin doth she stand!—I fear—
 Dread her—yet will speak to her.

Guin. *[R.]* Lady!

Jud. *[L.]* They say—strange is the tale, stranger if't be true,
 That thou art learn'd in deep and hidden lore,
 Beyond the common grasp of human mind.

Guin. I am!

Jud. Canst read the stars—and draw from out their globes
 That knowledge which foretells the fates of men?

Guin. I can!

Jud. *[Coming towards her.]* This is unholy—but most
 wonderful.

Guin. I've sojourn'd long with nature: and have woo'd
 So fervently her charms, until that she
 Disclos'd to me her depths of loveliness!
 Have knelt at night beneath the golden stars,
 Until, in pity, they unveil'd to me
 The awful visions of all-coming time!
 There's not a spring-tide daffodil that throws
 Its sick perfume upon the morning air,
 Nor gauzy harebell nodding 'neath the dew,
 Nor flaunting herb whose sweeten'd poison darts
 Its subtle venom through the curdling blood,
 That hath not shed for me its secret gifts,
 And been, as slaves, obedient to my will.
 I have liv'd *alone*; these were my solacers.

Jud. But thou hast friends?

Guin. Friends! What! Hast thou dreams too?

Friends ! No, I am not so unfortunate ;
The world is ages old, there *may* have liv'd
Within its centuries some one score friends.

Jud. These are stern truths—if truths——

Guin. If !

What have I learn'd to reverence in man ?
Lady, long ere my weeping childhood had
Rip'd into youth, they told me that I came
Of royal stock ; and when my tongue would ask,
“ Where are my kingdoms—powers—wealth ? ”
They pointed to a rude and barren rock,
Torn by the sea—a den for howling wolves !
[*Laughs.*] My palace steps were slim'd with ocean's weeds ;
My courtiers—gulls ! my armies—hooded choughs !—
Lady—your purpose ?

Jud. My husband !

Guin. Go on.

Jud. Knowest thou the issue ? Quick. Here's gold.

Guin. [*Proudly refusing.*] I can command the elements !

Jud. My prayers.

Guin. Keep them.

Jud. My love ! my thanks ! my gratitude !

Guin. Baits for fools !—

Ere sixteen years had shed their blight on thee.
Thou, in thy thoughtless innocence, didst save
A Briton's life. It was in Normandy.

Jud. Oh ! yes—he was our slave.

Guin. [*Passionately.*] He was my child,
And free or shackled was most dear to me.
For slave-born mothers love their slave-born sons !—
Thine husband, now, hath gone unwisely forth
To cope with one, upon whose helm swords break
As brittle reed——

Jud. And this so much I knew.

Guin. He may be saved.

Jud. By whom ?

Guin. By thee.

Jud. My life is his—'tis valueless to me,
But as a merchandize to purchase his.

Guin. Hast thou courage ?

Jud. Necessity breeds that.

There is a scymitar, call'd *will* that cuts
Through all—making the fragile strong, the strong,
Invincible !

Guin. Well ?

Jud. Speak ! what ! wilt not answer me ?

A favour ill conferr'd deserves not thanks.
Woman ! I am not senseless rock or stone.
I am a Norman lady, and whate'er

Comports with honour, love, both unto death,
I hold the hazard nought that saves his life.

Guin. Thou art not prodigal.

Jud. Who is't that loves—that e'er is prodigal?
Then let my venture see its blackest shape,
And if I shrink or swerve, then point at me
As most unworthy to be thought, or call'd,
The mother of my husband's child.—
If thou dost know the poison that affects
His dearer life—find out an antidote—
That suddenly—

Guin. [*Aside.*] 'Twere pity I infected her, but be she tri-
Th' infection will not take, more than the rose
Will catch the nettle's sting, that sleeps against
Its leaf.

Jud. Mother!

Guin. [*Starts. Aside.*] What though she sav'd my young
born; her sire,
Before that week was old, scourged him to death.
In love, the eye doth feed the heart; in hate,
The heart, the eye!

Jud. Pity!

Guin. Which proves the most the love thou vauntest so,
That thou should'st see thy husband slain: or shield
His sacred life, by yielding that, which some,
Call honour.

Jud. Had he the choice, honour, and so choose I. [*Turns away.*]

Guin. Stay! Remember, this honour is a term
Symbolical, 'twixt man and man, which will
Admit of thousand varyings! What thou
Callest honour, I deem folly; what I
Call honour, thou would'st scoff upon. Go to—
A cup crack'd, i' the dark, is still a cup
Of worth to him, who knows not that 'tis flaw'd.
Honour, appearing so, is honour still.

Jud. Out upon thee!

Guin. There is no sin in breaking through these webs
That fashion—will—convenience—may breed.
When life is balanc'd 'gainst the breaking them.

Jud. Oh! shame.

Guin. Thou art the Bastard's niece;
Of him, wert given to thy Saxon mate,
As bond 'twixt him and him—thy purchas'd lord!

Jud. Purchas'd! 'Tis false. I'll have thee scourg'd
with whips,
If thou durst breathe upon his nobleness.

Guin. That bond is snapt, making the breaker on't
Foe unto him, who that weak chain impos'd.

Jud. [*Faintly.*] Yes.

Guin. Instruct thine uncle of this mad revolt :
Start not ! That thou may'st urge, when all is lost—
As all will be—upon this ground, his life.

Jud. Never !
As he my husband, so will I, his wife ;
Were it to die, to bear the deathless brand
Of infamy, whose shame was undeserv'd ;
To feel the lash of scorn, to sicken, starve !
These I could bear, and smile, so he were sav'd ;
But blast his honour, by thus losing mine,
Oh ! no—no—no—never ! never !

Guin. Farewell ; and let him die—and feel that thou
For such a stroke, hast, wanton, murder'd him.

Jud. Stay ! One moment ! A little space
For me to steady my bewildered brain.
His life—my happiness—lie on one word ;
I am as 'twere upon a pinnacle.
Preserve me heaven, or I fall for ever :
Woman ! I will not do 't.

Guin. [*Aside.*] Thou wilt—
Betray this unadvised revolt. If so,
Thy husband lives : if not, why, then he dies.
Have horse ready, fleet as the air,
Upon the coast a ship, 'twere easy then
To seek thy native Normandy. From thence
To France, for Philip England's enemy ;
Upheld by him, thou canst with safety plead
Thy husband's life, and count on sure success.

Jud. This is all true—a ray of light breaks in,
I've wings to bear me from the giddy height.
This instant for a messenger ! Thou hast,
Good mother, placed a solace in my heart,
Hast found indeed the poison's antidote.

[*Crosses to R.*]

A messenger for Normandy !

[*Exit, R.*]

Guin. Poor, silly moth, thou'rt fluttering in the web ;
A messenger ! Weak fool. *My* messenger
Ere this hath summoned back the Norman King.
How some make toys of those that others rear
To worship at,—who'd think she was a shrine ?
In plucking from mine arms, the all I lov'd,
These tyrants pluck'd from out mine heart, its love.
Then let them answer it.

[*Exit, D. F. L.*]SCENE II.—*A Wild Heath. Evening.*

*Trumpets and Marshal Music sounding a March, Troops
 seen in the distance.*

WALTHEROF, EDWIN, MORCAR, CERDIC, DE GUADER, FITZ-
 OSBORNE, FRETHERIC, *discovered.*

Walt. The evening shrouds within her dusky veil

The untrod way. The horn'd moon is up,
And lesser lights look from their lofty thrones.
Our steeds have matched their speed 'gainst tireless time,
With such effect, we can afford ourselves
And them, a breathing space.

Cer. [R.] A breathing space!

What sport is this, that we must breathe on it,
'Tis war! who stays to breathe, but stays to fall.
And yet methinks, a cup of gen'rous wine
Would freshen me.

Walt. [C.] One cup! then be it so—that one we quaff
To honour and our wives. Within my tent
Ere night, that bringer of sweet sleep,
Shall wrap all nature in her gloomy fold,
We, o'er our wine will sketch to-morrow's march,
While William's safely sped in Normandy.

Enter OFFICER and troops, R., place the guard, and Exit L.

Cer. True, William is in Normandy,
But oh! the lion hath behind him left
A watchful lioness. I fear him not,
He is a noble beast, of noble port,
But I mistrust me much his crafty dame,
Cold, cruel, passionless; a Saxon hath
No value in her eye above a hound.

Edw. Brave Brihtric Maw, that truest gentleman,
Our nation's pride, fell victim to her hate,
Requiting not her guilty lustfulness.

Cer. Speak not of Brihtric Maw; it rouses all
The tiger in my heart, and clouds mine eye
With blood.

Mor. [to Edw.] That was unwise to speak it thus.
Thou shouldst not fire the torch of memory.

Cer. Memory! Who is it talks of memory?
Some child who recollects a broken toy.

Fre. [R.] Rein in this passion, noble thane.

Cer. Passion!

I had a child! A child! Great powers, *had!*
Oh! pardon, gentlemen, this fearful *had*
Hath bred a *has* must forth, or I shall choke.

Walt. [R. C.] Noble Cerdic!

Cer. Ely, thou never hadst a child who was
To thee the rising sun of all thy day,
Which rose, gladdened, and then set for ever!
No flower twining round thy rough-hewn heart,
Until a damned hand tore up the root,
And left it wither'd, and that rude heart bare.

Walt. [Taking Cerdic's hand.] My noble friend!

Cer. Thanks! thanks! Thy heart is in 't.

'Twas whisper'd round—Oh! foul as hell the lie—
That William sought, and not in vain, oh! lie!
My young girl's love. She was as pure as light—
Her mother could have borne none other.
This wolf, this fell Matilda, heard, believ'd;
Asked not for proof, but in the dead of night,
When my sweet child was lapp'd in maiden sleep,
Her damned parasites, with sacrilegious hands,
Laced her fair breast, and stole her life away.
They murdered her!

Walt. I cannot comfort thee.

Cer. I am a garden wanting in sweet herbs.
The briar springs where once my lily bloom'd.
I am a tree, with all my promise nipp'd
By cruel frost, most fit to feel the axe.
I hear her prattle now.

[*Crosses, R.*]

My child! my child! Forgive me, gentlemen.

Walt. Weep not. I'd rather see thy blood burst from
A gaping wound, than thus thy tears. Weep not.

Cer. These are not tears of water, but of blood,
Right from my heart of hearts, whence she was dragg'd,
Thus leaving it a flesh-rent sepulchre.

Place me i' the van, to front these robbers.
If I carve not my vengeance on their brows,
Then call me any name most foul to man.
But ask me not to speak, my words are rude.
Make me the instrument, my sword's my tongue;
Then be your parley short, and apt your phrase.
And he that plays me second in this game
Must be a man indeed.

[*Exit, R.*]

Walt. How wrongs have made that rough tongue eloquent.

De Gua. [*L. c.*] His were a cause alone to point our swords,
Did not revenge—

Walt. [*Starting.*] Revenge! who named revenge?
I fight not for revenge.

That madman's justice, who with veiled brow,
Yields up the dagger to a madman's hand.
How worse than fools are they who seek to right
Themselves before such guilty judgment-seat.
Who dare, with bold and impious hands, to snatch
The lightning from the clouds, to launch it on
Their failing brothers' heads. Revenge!

'Tis savage, indiscriminate, and blind.
A belted knight should scorn to lift his sword,
Or couch his lance, at such unworthy call.
My noble friend mistakes, 'tis not revenge.

De Gua. Be what it may, to-morrow's sun shall see
Our arm'd array in march for Westminster.
Then be our watch-word, Liberty.

And on t'ward Westminster. Ye have your wrongs,
We have our ills. To-morrow's light will prove
Which spurs us deepest 'mid our enemies.

Edw. And be it so. Matilda once our own—

Walt. We hold within our play this able queen,
With which to check, and more, to mate the king. [*Retiri*
[*Distant trumpets, as scene closes.*]

SCENE III.—*Night. Open Country.*

Enter GUINEVER, L.

Guin. Thus far I've track'd these wolves upon their way,
And I have set the bloodhounds on their trail.
To-morrow shall they wet their pointed fangs.
To-morrow! This madd'ning joy will murder me.—
There is a step upon the waste.

Enter GURLOIS, L.

Gur. I am too soon.

Guin. No!

Gur. What's next to do?

Guin. Hush! boy—dost hear upon the wind, the noise
Of far off mirth and revelry?

Gur. I do.

Guin. The Saxon swine are swilling o'er the board.
How many on to-morrow drink no more?
Oh! could I with a thought, but crush them all.
Shake this firm ground, as though great hell had heaved,
So burst the massive fastnesses of earth,
And crumble this fair isle from point to point.
But what I can, I will—thou hast thy work.

Gur. It shall be done.

Guin. I feel it, boy.

To-morrow thou wilt seek this Waltheof.
Instruct him that his wife hath play'd him false:—
Torture him as thou hast seen the wild wood cat
Her prey: but first to Warrenne—stir him from
His lair, and bring destruction on them all.

Gur. I will. Instruct mine ignorance.

Guin. This night I tread the dark and dismal heath
And front the Saxon lord, and whisper him,
His wife hath done some bad and fearful deed.
Be sure that thou upon the morrow's dawn,
Confirm my tale—deal wound on wound—and then
When madness lashes—leave him—

Gur. To seek

The Norman Warrenne, who will find him chains
To bind him down; and we can scoff at him.

Guin. Thou art my son.

Gur. Instruct me now.

Guin. Come then, on—as we go, I will pour all
The venom of my soul into thine ear,
That thou mayst launch it out. Come! [*Exeunt, R.*]

SCENE IV.—*The Tent of Waltheof.*

*Conspirators sitting round the table. WALTHEOF, CERDIC,
EDWIN, DE GUADER, and FRETHERIC.*

Walt. [*Rising.*] This cup's the last—our Norman masfers
say—
Our Saxon throats love far too well the wine.

Cer. Nay, one more cup, my palate hath not caught
The rich and racy flavour of the grape.

Walt. I say no more : my mind is not so rack'd,
That I would desp'rate drown its cares in wine.
Good night.

Edw. Good night !
Pray all we meet again to-morrow eve—
To say "good night !"

Cer. I'll drink with maidens next,
Whose necks are purpled with the luscious wine
Cry shame on thee ! No man e'er fought the worse,
Who on the eve to-morrow's fortune drank.

Walt. I'll pledge thee, Cerdic, when the battle's
fought—
Before the heather cock hath plumed his wing,
We meet again. And so sweet sleep be on
Ye all.—Good night !

All. Good night ! [*Exeunt, R. 2 E. through Tent.*]

Walt. Oh ! tell me all ye glad and golden stars
[*Stage begins to darken.*]

That pattern Heaven from its pole to pole !
What think ye of these wild and fearful deeds
That we poor worms, in our brief journey work ?
Oh ! tell me night, and ye, ye quiet hills,
Why we this work pursue—and are not crush'd ?
I, who was bless'd with love, content, and ease,
Must frantic raise a fire, from out whose pile
I've snatch'd a brand to light me on to death !
How could I blame, if yonder glist'ning orb
Shot from its sphere, and shiver'd me to dust !——
But, better be a gaping idiot, [*The Stage becomes gradually
very dark.*]

With wild stare gazing on a deed of blood,
Than be so tender to these conscience whips
Which lash to madness when the fit is on.—
Is that the buck bell from yon dusky wood,
On which the shadow of the night cloud sleeps ?

The air has restless spirits on its wings—
My brain seems full of wild and fearful shapes—

Enter GUINEVER.

I have a dread on me— [*Sees Guin. Lights partly turned on.*]
Who? What art thou?

Guin. [L.] Waltheof!

Walt. [*Whispering.*] Well!

Guin. Saxon!

Walt. Here!

Art thou of earth, and so corruptible?
Or purer essence, fashion'd like to us,
Perceptible, yet to the touch impalpable.

Guin. Art thou prepared?

Walt. For what?

Guin. Thou'lt dread to hear.

Walt. Who, what art thou? that, questionable thus,
Creepest upon this wild heath's wildest waste?
As though some damned spirit doom'd to haunt
The spot of thy blood-guilty trafficking.
A voice, a form, that mock both ear and sight.
Art corporal? Hast wants?

Guin. As health, food, drink—
And such as tear and rend thy mortal frame.

Walt. If thou art heaven-sent, thou hast my knee;
If fresh from hell, why then I'll cope with thee. [*Draws.*]
Speak! What art thou?

Guin. Within thy trembling grasp
Thy father's sword shakes like an aspen twig.
Prove on this doubtful form, its temper'd edge.
'Twill cleave, but—

Walt. But what?

Guin. Air!

Walt. Never yet did unseen essence take
So true a copy of our mortal flesh.
Thus will I prove—

Guin. And in that proof lose all
That I, commission'd, bring to thee.

Walt. To me?

Guin. To-morrow.

Walt. Well.

Guin. Thou shalt die!

Walt. That shakes me not.

Guin. Nor tremblest not?

Walt. Why should I fear to meet to-morrow, what
From sire to son, has been entailed on me?
A prophetic spirit thou, and not know
That free hearts never faint upon their march
To liberty! Hast more? if so, speak it.

Guin. There was a feast, and all the brave and fair
Of Briton's children revelled with their guests.
(Such banquets have been ever sacred held.)
There was a wife, a lovely Saxon dame,
But newly wedded to her British lord.
(Wives have been ever deemed as careful most
Of husbands' lives, 'twas strange she was not so.)
The purpling cup went round, the dimpled hand
Of lovely woman offer'd it, the eye
Of woman lighted it. Dost' heed?

Walt. Go on.

Guin. Now, mark the sequel of this banquet scene.
The new-made wife smiled on her British lord.
Before that smile had vanished from her lip
He was a corsé! It lighted him to death.
Nimed eare Saxas, blood-red Hengist said.
The banquet-room became a charnel-house;
That smile was borrowed from her native hell,
And smiled a nation to a nation's grave.
Dost comprehend?

Walt. I do.

Guin. King, nobles, serfs,
Fell all before that lightning blast, that smile.

Walt. Well?

Guin. Excellently well.
Saxon! 'th' avenger came; the Norman chieft
Who beat you headlong from your carrion,
Laugh'd my fellow-fiends! Cords, chains of twisted steel,
Were hung on Saxon necks.
The Norman masters lash their Saxon serfs.
Down slave. Waltheof!

Walt. Hence!

Guin. Awake each sense,
And listen with acutest ear. Dost heed?

Walt. Hence!

Guin. Rowena, she betray'd her Vortigern.
Saxon, look home. Thou hast a foreign wife!

Walt. Out, lying fiend! Wouldst taint *her* purity—

Guin. Rowena killed her Vortigern; 'twas on a kiss.
Kiss'd him to death. Thy Judith hath a lip.
The Saxon wife betray'd her British lord;
Why not the Norman wife her Saxon mate?

Walt. Fiend!

Guin. The honey from her lip will poison thee!

Walt. Devil!

Guin. Saxon!

Walt. What art thou?

Guin. [*Slowly retiring.*] Air!

Walt. Air!

Is this mine arm ? my hand ? are those the stars ?
 Or are my senses strained beyond that point
 Where reason fails ? These all are palpable,
 Yet so was she. She ! Who ? Night, answer me
 My busy heart rebellious knocks against
 Its shielding ribs, as though 'twould break the bars.
 My Judith false ? Yes, when the full orb'd moon
 Shall stand stock still amid her golden stars.
 Vanish'd ! Return ! And if I shake or blanch,
 Though thou should'st come in shape more fearful
 Than darkest hell can heave from out its depths,
 Brand me coward.—Again I——

Enter EDWIN and CERDIC, C.

Cer. [R.] Waltheof !

Edw. [R. C.] Friend !

Walt. Didst—didst see it ?

Edw. See ! See what ?

Walt. [Pausing.] Air !

Cer. Put up thy sword, why prove its metal on
 The fleshless night ? Keep it for Norman hearts !
 Thy cheek is blanch'd : the dew is on thy brow.
 Why, what unmans thee thus ?

Walt. Would make a child of thee ! [Crosses to c.]

Cer. What was't ?

Walt. Nothing.

Edw. Nothing ?

Walt. She said, what stood there, corporal, — was
 "air !"

And that is nothing !

Cer. She ! Who ?

Walt. That's the question, noble Thane.

Tell me, Edwin, for thou hast dived more deep
 Than I, within these 'wilderer mysteries.
 What thinkest thou of shapes, that speak and act,
 Then pierce the heart, find out its richest ore ;
 That breathe on it, corrode its purity,
 Then, melt in—air.

Edw. The eye is but the servant of the brain,
 Which, when o'ertax'd, will procreate such forms,
 That freeze the brain, altho' it father'd them.
 Imagination teems with fantasque shapes,
 That take a form we love, or dread the most,
 The nerves o'erstretched : the want of cordial sleep ;
 A thousand—

Walt. Well ?

Edw. Nothings, will create for us
 Visionary somethings : which in good truth
 Are, very nothings !

Walt. 'Twas, Edwin, well defined!
Nothing, say'st thou *is* something—and yet is—
Nothing: I do comprehend thee, Edwin.
What says Cerdic?

Cer. Cerdic has a brain too dull to cope with
Edwin's school philosophy.

Walt. The dullest brains will fire when trial'd thus;
But hence, ye dark and drear unwholesome thoughts,
Which totter to the base, my manhood's citadel.
Thus! thus! I shake ye off, as eagles shake
The humid fog from their aspiring wings.
To arms! to arms! Once more I stand a man—
My foot on earth, my face turn'd at the stars!
My heart my country's, and my soul my God's. [*Exit, R. 2 E.*]

Edw. What hath he seen? All upward from his youth
He was most apt, to think that spirits walk'd,
And fore-doomed those who were by nature doom'd.

Cer. Should Thor and Woden come, I'd laugh at them,
And say it was my brain diseas'd, not that
The world's great laws were broke, for worm like I.

Edw. How he did spring again! his spirit fought
Against his fears: as some strong swimmer fights
Against the haughty waves, and conquers them.
A noble heart!

Cer. A noble heart! and yet
Too full of kindliness for these rude times.
He is more framed for peace than war, and yet
In war, how few more terrible.
I've thought of Odin, when I've seen his sword,
Flame in the battle front: his glitt'ring helm
Frown danger down—and like a meteor gleam!
He is so noble, that, while Cerdic lives
There still lives one to die for Waltheof.

[*Exeunt, c.*]

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*Castle Hall of Warrenne, Earl of Surrey.*

Enter WARRENNE and ESQUIRE, followed by GURLOIS, R.

War. What we would have be true, that think we true.
This is no news, that for some subtle end
You forged to cheat me with a counterfeit?

Gur. 'Tis current news; if counterfeit, you have
Your saddle-girths, and ready hands at will,
To scourge the lie, if lie, upon my back.

War. "De Guader wed." That news is nothing worth.

"The English hinds have joined the Norman loras ;"
That's less than nought, but flies with spiders leagued.
Yet Waltheof! The Saxon Waltheof! The island dog,
Hath knit his powers with these malcontents,
Is royal news which might mine earldom buy,
Brought it but sure assurance on its wings.

Gur. What end have I to gull you with a trick?
Care I if you or they be uppermost?

Ye are my masters both, and I your slave.
Both crush the worm; both spur the jaded steed.
Both *honour* me with cords, and chains, and blows.

War. Why tell this news to me?

Gur. I hate you less.

You clench the bolts, they forged and rivet them.

War. Then am I on this noble Saxon's track,
And I will slot him to the very death.

Away, nor have excuse for tarrying,
Till thou within the Norman William's ear
Shalt pour this news: my signet, here my purse,
My ablest horse. Unmew the falcon, thou
Shalt strike these herons headlong to the earth. [*Crosses to u.*]
Not gone?

Gur. [*L.*] And this is gold, for which I've heard
Men sell their souls, lie, cheat; for which, I'm told,
Sires slay their sons, and sons wish fathers dead.
Is 't so?

War. Aye, gold!

Gur. [*Taking a stone from his dress.*] Yet this weighs
heavier;

And in a sling, from well-directed aim,
Will store my hut, or slay my direst foe.
And no one envies me this stone—no one.
For it will murder me. Here's weapon, food—
When wrong'd, revenge.

Thou Norman god, lie there. [*Throws down the gold.*]

War. The foolish churl. Keep it.

Gur. Wilt it buy air, light, lays of forest birds?
Bribe stars to shine, winds blow, or rains to fall?
Wilt it balm bruised hearts? buy liberty?
Perish thy gold.

War. Thou wilt not go?

Gur. No.

War. No!

Gur. I tell thee, No!

War. Slave!

Gur. That's true; and yet I heed thee not.
I brought thee news, and my reward is this,
That all thy gold cannot outbid—That by
My means the wolf and dog shall sooner meet,

throttle, tear, slay, wound, do anything ;
I can laugh while Norman, Saxon blood
mix on British earth. What 's gold to this ?

ar. Cords for this slave.

ur. These are the words, " cords," " chains."
but my soul, when thou dost bind my limbs,
I will call thee Master, and not blush.

! [*Fells a soldier who tries to bind him, picks up the
gold, and hurls it at him.*]

e's salve for thee.

[*Exit Gur., L.*]

ar. After him.

[*Exeunt Soldiers, L.*]

e this Saxon, and his Norman wife.

turned to hate ; yes, love, which is a bed

fic for foul blasting weeds, as 'tis

arer fruits. Oh ! how I worshipp'd her ;

he, than fabled beauty far more beautiful.

y born—ambition is my dream. Rich—

efore I coveted, for money is

ition's surest friend. And when that I

fondly deem'd I'd but to swoop and snatch

beauty, titles, wealth, this Saxon fox

off my prey ; therefore I hated him.

then I've lain like lagging poison in

dlood, and now, now, will I level him.

[*Exit, L.*]

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in the Castle of Waltheof.*

JUDITH and ADELA discovered.

le. [*R.*] Thou a Norman lady ! Cry shame on thee.

so but call myself a one-day wife,

gladder thoughts within my heart than thou.

greatness bought by dangling near the robes

olish wives, what honour in such greatness ?

every page might then outshine his lord.

d. [*L.*] Thy heart is fresh : this is thy spring of life.

le. Thou art so old : one moon more aged than I.

, thee, the world deems wise—and me, a feather

s'd up by a breeze, a very crest upon

foam of life. But if thy wisdom make

faint of heart—pray I, for ignorance.

d. And thou art right : our wisdom teaches us,

much of peace lies wrapp'd in ignorance.

le. Good saints ! A sigh ! a very tell-tale sigh !

read thy glass to day ? Thy cheek is pale.

ith, go write some red upon its page,

ove, or fear, or grief, all palers of the cheek,

robb'd fresh nature of her vermeil touch.

t ailest thou ?

d. Didst ever do a wrong that good might come of it ?

Adel. First tell me what is right, and what is wrong.
 I've torn a spray from off a fav'rite plant
 To make another tree : then did I wrong
 The parent tree to right my flower bed ?

Jud. [*Sounding a bell.*] Thy philosophy's at fault.

Enter EDRED, R.

The horses are caparison'd ? [Crosses to R.]

Edr. They are, my lady

Jud. The fleetest and the best ; such steeds that have
 But breath'd when baser mettle's blown.

Edr. Such steeds are not in Normandy.

Jud. Nor England !

Kind Edred, stand upon the battlements ;
 If thou should'st see a speck, a very mote,
 On the horizon's brim,—portcullis' up,
 And drawbridge down.

Edr. Upon my life.

Jud. So prompt.

I like thine answer, boy ; thou'lt one day make
 A gallant knight :—Now go.

A match, dear Adela, 'twixt me and time :—

My coronet—Not gone ? Away ! [Crosses to R., *Exit* Edr. R.]

Adel. Judith, thy voice, thine eye, are harbingers
 Of coming ill ; there is some danger near.

Is't hidden grief, or will it frankly come ?

Jud. Here, sit thee down, my wench : thus, by my knee,

I care not now to look upon thy face ;

I have a flush of youth come over me,

Of happy summer eves, and minstrelsy.

When first I gaz'd in loving eyes—and lov'd again :

I can remember well a minstrel's song,

And thou shalt give thy fresh young judgment on't.

Adel. Right willingly, and hold my thanks thy due.

But thou must tell a tale of honour—love—

Why start ?—of ladies—knights. Again, that start.

Jud. [*Aside.*] Our spirits are as wells, from whence we draw
 The clear or troubled waters of this life.

Adel. Was this the prelude of the minstrel's lay ?

Jud. No, 'twas but a thought, that sprung unsummon'd,

And travell'd on until it reached my lips,

And so I spake it. I was gazing back,

As through a troubled dream, into that time

When youth and I had waking happiness.

I'll say no more—than 'twas my Eden time.

Adel. What serpent spoil'd thy paradise ?

Jud. Time, with his wrinkled sister Care : the twain
 Are one.—We were a merry company.

We sat upon a bank with flowers prank'd,

On which the moonbeams slept. Thus ran the lay—
Thou heedest not.

Ade. Good faith, I do.

Jud. A lord of armies look'd upon a land
And coveted—

Ade. That's not unusual.

Jud. Coveting, desired to win—
And as is often told—might o'ercame right.—
But so it happ'd, that on the weaker side
Was one, who conquer'd, still was unsubdued.
Who rose each time more strongly from his fall.

Ade. As great hearts do.

Jud. And so fate will'd it that
He lay nigh dead upon the crimson'd field.
The victor pitied; loved him for his valour—
And then cherish'd him.

Ade. He had a great heart too!
I envy both: well can I fancy them.

Jud. To prove his love, the victor gave to him,
As 'twere a tie to bind friend more to friend,
His niece for wife: and gratitude and love,
And some respect, each held the other in—
Cemented them, and they were firmest friends.

Ade. As they should be.

Jud. The victor of the land
Became unjust, and sore the bitter cry
From broken hearts, rose up to Heaven.

Ade. Then, on my soul, that cry, rous'd up once more
The vanquish'd man—his country o'ercame all.

Jud. It did.

Ade. I'm glad o' that—that's man's true-heartedness.
But his dear wife.

Jud. Was as a castaway,
That feared both rocks and waves.

Ade. And yet she clung
Unto her better self—her anchorage—
Her lord?

Jud. She did.

Ade. Who doubted it?

Jud. And yet—
Did not. One came to her—and in the time
Of her great grief.

Ade. Not another lord?

Jud. Fie! No.

But one of her own sex—most potent, wise,
Who with enchantments dread, the future forc'd,
To tell its mysteries.

Ade. That was most impious.

Jud. The wrinkled sister said, the husband should

Return unscath'd, should fly in safety with
His sorely trial'd wife, if she betrayed
Her lord unto the Conqueror.
If not, then would he die!

Ade. [*Starting up.*] And she, threw all
The dastard thoughts away. Thrust forth the witch,
And trusted to her lord; his prowess, and
His right.

Jud. She did not.

Ade. No! a coward then:
Who did not dare to trust a righteous cause,
But i' the balance placed her feeble strength,
Against unrighteousness: she was no wife,
No woman, Judith.

Jud. She was.

[*Exit*]

Ade. My dull brain
Conceives. Who was that dame?

Jud. My husband's wife,

Ade. Oh, no! no! no!

Jud. [*Passionately.*] If mine own sex can comprehend
not,

Then how will he. Now, am I lost indeed!

Ade. And didst thou set this impious woman's words
Against thy better sense—thy better faith?

Jud. I did. A husband, girl, is not a worthless toy,
That dimm'd by keeping, can be thrown aside,
And when the fit is on, be ta'en again.
He is our world—once lost—talk not of life.
Friends, country, all! great, good, bright, beautiful:
Our very souls 'gainst him, are nothing worth—
And so I perill'd husband—honour—soul! [*Crosses to L*]

Ade. I am a young, and wilful girl, and not
Surpassing wise; have never puzzled o'er,
This fine-drawn difference 'twixt right and wrong.
And yet it strikes my dull, unpolish'd wit,
That heaven never sends such messengers,
As her you tell about, to speak His will.

Jud. Our fears and doubts make us employ strange means

Ade. My husband too—my noble husband too.

Enter EDRED, R.

Jud. Thy news?

Edr. A horseman, good my lady, pressing nigh.

Jud. Is't thy lord?

Edr. I've watch'd them coming since

Both horse and man were lesser than the swallows' wing.

Jud. Is't thy lord?

Enter SOLDIER, D. F.

Is thy lord well?

Sold. [*Giving a letter.*] My lord is well.

Ade. Hast thou nought for me?

No letter, word? Didst see my husband, *man*.

Sold. I did not note him, lady.

Ade. Thou'rt blind, then:

He is an oak amid the forest trees.

My Judith, tremblest thou? Thy dagger, boy.

Now read.

[*Cuts the silk.*]

Jud. [*Reading.*] Loved wife,—“To-morrow we shall march to Westminister.”

To Sold. Boy, how look'd thy lord, when he did give thee this?

Sold. I did not mark him, lady.

Jud. Why should'st thou? Go!

[*Exit Sold.*]

[*Reads.*] “William still remains in Normandy, unconscious of our plans: our numbers fast increase: in Cornwall, Wales, and in the North, the Saxons are in arms. If Westminister be won, and William still in ignorance, my country may be saved. Pray for our success.” Oh!

[*Jud. sinks down.*]

Ade. Judith!

Jud. Pray for thy success!

Oh! I have laid the axe into the root

Of all thy glory. Pray! oh, yes, that thou

May'st not curse me.

Ade. What, Judith! Courage.

Jud. Oh, fool! fool! fool! to be so gull'd to mine
Own undoing. I was, as is a bird,
Upon the waste of waters fluttering;
Beating against the blast. I sought a rock,
But on its points the tempest shatter'd me!

Ade. Be comforted. Oh! lay it to thy heart—
The act was virtuous. Forgive thyself.

Jud. Forgive myself! No. I am self-convict.

My soul is criminal—accuser—judge;
And though the world may stamp me innocent,
There is that stilless voice within—that yet
Self-guilty pleads; self-deals the punishment.

[*Ade. approaches her.*] Away! there is pollution in my touch.
Now do I feel—soul-styl'd—a very wretch. [*Exeunt, L. H.*]

SCENE III.—*Waltheof's Tent.*

WALTHEOF (*solus*) *discovered.*

Walt. Was she not air? Or is't, as Edwin said,
The brain o'ertax'd incorporates. 'Tis so—
These busy doubts, their uncouth shadows are
Ten thousand times in horror multiplied—
'd sooner face a clump of Norman spears,
Unhelm'd, unarmed, than visible nothings
That prophesy thus horribly—and like

The rain o'er the infected house, croak death,
While yet the smile is on the lip.
The heaven of my soul corrupted is,
As 'twere with breath from hell. A step.—

Enter GURLOIS, breathless, through tent, R. H. C.

How now?

Gur. [L.] The Normans are at hand!

Walt. Art mad?

Gur. Their neighing horses roused me from my bed
Of heath and moss. I started—fled; and thou
Hast all my news.

Walt. Their coming, and the news
Of it in one befits not common chance.
There is, I fear'st it, treachery abroad!

But no—thou art some feeble instrument. [*Sitting down.*]

Gur. I would hold converse with lord Waltheof.

Walt. What would'st with him?

Gur. 'Tis for his private ear.

'Tis private news.

Walt. [*Carelessly*] Speak! What is't?

Gur. Aye. Thou art lord Waltheof.

Walt. That's true. What then?

Gur. I come from Huntingdon.

Walt. [*Starting up.*] My wife and child! I am no coward. Oa!
What's done must be endur'd; therefore, go on—
With me, who am now somewhat scorch'd, new fire
Makes light impress. My wife and child are well?

Gur. Thy wife and child—

Walt. I thank thee for those words—
Whatever thou may'st say, I pardon thee.
They are both well!

Gur. Well! Well had it been for Waltheof,
The Saxon Waltheof, had he ne'er wed
The Norman Judith. She is—

Walt. What?

Gur. False!

Walt. [*Seizing him.*] Hound! [*Throws him to R.*]

Gur. Slay me! The truth will live beyond my life,
And thou most foul for murd'ring honesty.

Walt. I'd strangle thee; but that were merciful!
Thou art a traitor. Stay! nor answer yet.
Bethink thee ere thou snapest every cord
That holds my heart within my shaking frame,
Answer boldly! nor spread out thus, thine hands,
Nor turn away, nor shrug, nor frown, nor juggle with
Thy tongue: Speak, quick—let nothing stand betwixt
My question and thy simple yea or nay.
Now, fix thine eye on mine. So! Art thou true?

Gur. I am.

Wall. And that was boldly said.

Then, what is left in life to battle for?

She false! *my* wife! Then truth's a flower that

Doth scorn to grow so near mortality.

If thou hast told me wrong, or in one word,

One syllable, hast swerv'd from honesty,

Be it the measure of the merest hair,

Thou'dst better be a wolf—gaunt, famish'd, grim—

With greedy bloodhounds fasten'd on thy throat—

Than brave my wrath!

Gur. I tell a common tale.

Wall. So soon! So soon,

But now departed, and so quick forgot—

Gur. She hath betrayed thy cause—thy country—thee—
And—to the Norman king!

Wall. The Norman king! Then she I love, is pure!
She is untaint! she is an angel still.

Unsoil'd! unstain'd! she but betrayed my cause:

And, to the king!—urged by her sex's fears,

Her doubts—her very love; and thus 'tis not

The wife, 'tis but, 'tis but, the woman that hath sinn'd.

[*Crosses to R.*]

Gur. Is she less guilty than Rowena was?

Wall. Rowena! Hast thou dealings with the fiend?

Or do fiends shame their master fiend, and speak

The truth?

Away! I'll not believe thee, swear until

Thy very tongue is hot with oaths; each oath

Will vouch a lie. What! weigh her years-old truth,

Her proved faith 'gainst that of such a slave!

No! no! no! I will not—dare not—trust thee.

[*Distant trumpet.*]

Gur. I hear the Norman trumpet on the breeze.

Wall. And that is true!—

The impress on his brow speaks honesty—

His looks are true; but what are looks? Nothing.

They are false dice that hide a specious trick!

And yet she hath betray'd my country's cause;

My countrymen—who thought I was the sun

Of all their world! How shall I look on them?

How meet their eyes?—How—Why stand'st thou there?

Gur. To know thy pleasure, Lord.

Wall. That thou'dst bring back to me the joys
Of some years' date, that thou hast reft from me.

Enter EGBERT, C.

Speak! thou canst not o'ershoot the mark of all
My wonder!

Egb. The Norman trumpet's braying down the wind
Its stern defiance to our Saxon host.

Walt. To helm and saddle—breathe my challenge back,
Unfurl my banner to the limber air,
Rouse! Rouse! my captains—bid my soldiers arm.
Bid Edwin, Cerdic, and De Guader here.
Away! we'll meet these Norman chivalry
With Saxon breasts. [Exit Egb., c.]

Why stand'st thou there?

Gur. The lady Judith.

Walt. Thou gibing fiend! would'st dare? Begone—nor front
The arrow from the o'erstrain'd bow. [Crosses to R.]

Gur. 'Tis dangerous to be good. These are my thanks—
The Lady Ju——

Walt. If thou would'st have thy skin stripp'd from thy
back,

Thou'lt utter once again that madd'ning name.

Begone! thy news hath made thee fearful to my sight.

No hideous devil, from his native hell

Can match thy hated form, Hence! Hence! [Exit Gur., c.]

And—so—he's gone! And now—I am a man

Of many woes—solitary—unloved!

And not, methinks, so full deserving it.

But, I will play no infant's part, although

My heartstrings all should strain to cracking-point.

Fate, do thy worst: I still have honour, life,

To match against this Norman, and my wife. [Exit, c.]

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A wild Heath. Storm rising.*

GUINIVER, *discovered*, R. S. E.

Guin. The levin bolt hath split the rock;

The firm earth trembled at the shock!

[Wind blows.] Rage and tear, thou howling blast,

Through all space, uncheck'd and free!

I laugh, as thou art shrieking past,

To an unknown destiny;

[Thunders.] Roar! roar! ye clouds, as fiends in pain,

[Rains.] Spit forth in sheets the blinding rain!

[Lightens.] Flame, ye streams of forked fire,

Light a nation's fun'ral pyre!

Down through air, and sea, and earth,

To the hell that gave ye birth,

While goblins scream with goblin mirth;

Lost and won!

Lost and won!

The battle hath been lost and won !

Men have done,

Beneath the sun,

What the very fiend would shun.

[Retires up.]

Enter WALTHEOF, L. U. E.

ult. The air and sky are full of fearful signs,

 ...nding something that is terrible.

hunderbolt that split the massive rock

its loud bellow, frightened my good steed,

heedless of the bit, broke wild away.

pest rages.] Blow ! blow ! ye surly messengers of
wrath ;

up this tree of grief whose roots are *here*,

[will call ye Heaven-sent, indeed !

pirit of my wife is on the blast ;

is a storm within—[*Sees Guin. n.*] Mine evil genius !

prophethess ! Art come again ? What now ?

new-born horror hast ? Wilt speak ?

Guin. Lost and won !

Lost and won !

The battle hath been lost and won !

ult. Away !

in. See, the dying and the dead,

Sleep upon their crimson bed.

Home, thou to thy lady's bower,

Smile upon thy blighting flower.

Home ! the kiss that welcomes thee,

Shall a kiss of poison be !

ult. Hence ! Why haunt me thus ?

in. I am the spirit of this heath.

Thine ancestor, once trod beneath

His foot a herb I lov'd ; and thou

Art but a weed, shall perish now.

Crack heart, shrink form, and manhood's bloom,

I now consign thee to the tomb. [*Crossing to L.*]

ult. False ! False !

n. The sun went down 'midst clouds last night,

A bar was 'cross his angry light.

With blood-red stare he look'd on earth—

Then leap'd this frantic storm to birth.

This day the Saxon *cowards* fled ;

[*Walt. approaches her.*]

The brave alone sleep with the dead.—

The after blow !—brain, scorch and burn,

Saxon ! remember Vortigern ! [*Exit, behind stones.*]

ult. [*Staggering against a tree.*] I do—nor am I likely
to forget. [*Storm.*]

v. [*Without.*] Ho ! Waltheof !

Enter EDWIN.

Hold ! hold ! ye howling winds—this whirl o'erpowers me !
This way I heard the voice ! [*Sees Walt.*] Waltheof !

Walt. [*Grasping his arm and whispering.*] Didst see
pass ?

Edw. [*L.*] No ! Where ?

Walt. [*R.*] There !

Edw. No !

Walt. Still ! Still my wife ! what unknown mischief yet
I am bewildered with this load of ills.

These nerves—this brain—if nature meant that they
Should thus be strain'd—she should have fram'd them
Of a tougher sort. My reason totters with't.

Edw. Be comforted.

Walt. Will telling do't ?

Oh ! had she been a light o'heel,
Betray'd my hopes, and juggled with my love,
I could have scorn'd—may be, forgotten her !
My country, and mine honour—in one
She dealt a wound words cannot heal !

Edw. Thou hast forgot thou art of royal stock ;
This grief would shame a very peasant churl—
Thou art a soldier, too !

Walt. I am a soldier, Edwin.

Rough hewn as from the block, with none o' that
Fine polish which wins most on ladies' hearts.
I am more conversant with sword and lance
Than with the courtier's smile and honied-word ;
And, haply, these may be my bane.
But if 't be said, I am without that fire,
That inward good, that proves a master-hand,
'Twere false.

Edw. As that which thou hast heard.

Walt. Which may not be false.

Edw. Or it may be.

'Tis but a fancy cradled i' the brain,
Which foster'd will, in time, to madness grow.

Walt. That were an end, indeed, more wished than hope
But I will be all gentleness. Stand by.
Be thou the judge. If guiltless she, and thou
Pronounce her so, then will I scorn the fiend,
And take her to my heart and cherish her.
If guilty she, it will be merciful
To cut her image from my trusting heart,
And write mine epitaph.

Enter DE GUADER, FRETHERIC, FITZ-OSBORNE, MOREA
My noble friends.

De Gua. Well met once more.
Our frothed steeds have far outstripp'd our foes,
Whose arméd heels have plough'd their coursers' sides
In vain pursuit.

Walt. Oh! shame! shame! shame!
That arméd hands should fly from arméd heels!

Edw. Chafe not, brave Waltheof; we could no more
Than man could do. 'Tis true the battle's lost.

Walt. Lost! Nothing's lost while life is left in us.

Fitz-Os. All may be well.

Walt. All may! All shall be well.
And yet with such amount of ill how can
It e'er be well, unless ill father's good.
We are disgraced; are beaten from the field
With life in us, and weapons in our hands.
Our Saxon annals once again are stain'd
With Saxon shame. As on I spurr'd my steed,
The crook-back'd beklame, from her moor-side hut,
With pointing-finger, launch'd her scorn at me,
And shriek'd out, "See the Dastard!"

Edw. Now, is this speaking like a man? when thou
This day, hast acted so much more than man?
Breasting with thy strength the Norman tide
That swept us headlong in its mighty rush.

Walt. Oh! would that it had swallow'd me.—
Brave Ely thou art wounded; look to it.

Fre. A scratch. A gift of love that I repaid
With interest. The lender did not live
To boast of unrequited principal.

De Gua. I have not seen good Cerdic since the morn.

Walt. He ne'er will see nor morn, nor eve again.
He and his sorrows now are both at rest.

De Gua. Not dead!

Walt. Disdaining he to show the Norman host
A coward's heel, he threw his foot before,
His back he set against a heap of slain,
And when one shouted, "Ransom, noble Thane,"
He clove him down, then grimly smil'd, and said,
Win it; and thus he greatly fought and fell,
The pile of death before him high as my lance.
And thus he died.

Fre. A noble fate; and this his epitaph:—
A soldier's death, told by a soldier's tongue.
But cheer, good friends, once lost not always lost.

Walt. And if I thought it were, this dismal waste
Should grave in Waltheof. But I live still
To match again this Conqueror. What, Sirs!
True living is not thinking what to act,
But acting that the which we dare to think.

To horse! to horse! our steeds now breath'd again,
 To Huntingdon; our castle's strong, the walls
 Will hold at bay the powers of the king.
 And there we'll lie till friends shall gather round,
 To whip this bastard back to Normandy.

[*Exeunt.*]SCENE II.—*A Chamber in the Castle of Waltheof.*

JUDITH and ADELA, L.

Ade. Wounded, my Judith, but not kill'd: There is
 An ark for thee in thine own conscience still.

Jud. Thou, lovely dove, would'st bring the olive branch?
 What's done, is done; and heaven's mighty hand
 Alone can weave good from this tangled web.

Ade. And still I hope.

Jud. Hope is a sorry balm
 For minds diseased.

Ade. Yet smile.

Jud. I cannot smile,
 And seem what I am not.

Ade. I would I were
 A fay of potent might, I'd call a smile
 Upon that lip.

Jud. 'Twould be a sickly one;
 A moon-ray, pale—and aye, as cold as it.

Ade. Now heed. Thou list'n'st not.

Jud. Oh, yes, I do.
 The lady, said'st thou, "false"—pray pardon me—
 My thoughts were on a journey gone.
 —Hark!

Ade. The wind around the battlements.

Jud. The rush of steeds.

Ade. The splashing waterfall!
 Go to!

Jud. I've lov'd the tramp of war-horse from my youth.
 'Twas music, when it brought my Waltheof.

Enter EDRÉD, *hastily*, R. C.

Cut short all compliment—thy news?

Edr. Lord Waltheof—

Jud. Lives?

Edr. I saw the star upon his charger's front,
 That foaming breasts the hill with lower'd crest.

Jud. He lives! now will I own that all the griefs
 That master'd me, are fangless, and—

Enter WALTHEOF, R. C.

My husband!

Walt. [*Embracing her.*] Judith!

[*Exit* Edr.]

Jud. My love hath lack of words, but in such terms,
That my glad tongue can speak: oh, take them all—
Of joy, and dear respect—love—

Walt. And honour.

Jud. Honour?

Walt. Aye, honour.

Jud. And honour.

Walt. [*Aside.*] Can such as she e'er murder on a kiss?
This slander hath th' innocuous serpent's skin,
But adder's fang. She is not false.

Ade. Hast thou no news for me, no little word?
I am not weeping—pray speak—pr'ythee speak—
Why—kill me not with looks—is he—he—

Enter DE GUADER, R. F.

[*Walt. and Jud. retire.*]

Dost thou deserve a tear? that thy good horse,
A bridegroom on his back, could not outstrip
A husband, wedded nigh for three long years.

De Gua. Blame not, sweet love; my soul flew on the
winds,

My body follow'd on my lagging steed.
And he that leads our noble Waltheof
On to his love, or to his enemy,
Must be a pitch above us common men.
Look thus; weep thus! thus meet my love—ever.

Ade. How I had vow'd to frown on thee: but now
My heart hath all forgot the lesson that
It conn'd so oft: for I am very, very glad.

Walt. [*Coming forward.*] Conquered.

Jud. Not dishonour'd. I have provided for
Thy safety, love; thy horse is in the court.
And by his side the Arab steed was brought
From Palestine, thou gav'st me on the day
That we were wed. Rememb'rest thou, dear love,
How thou did'st smile, and praise mine horsemanship!

Walt. [*c.*] I do well.

Jud. Upon the seas a ship
Will waft us o'er to Normandy.

Walt. And then?

Jud. Why then, thou'rt safe!

Walt. 'Twas very strange
That they should come—the king, troops, followers,
And the news of them—together—instant.

Jud. It was.

Walt. How knowest thou?

Jud. Thou said'st as much.
Thou look'st pale, dear love, and wan: Give me
Thy sword;—thou frownest on me, Waltheof.

Thou frown'st not so when I did fix thy spurs
At Pevensey: Art wounded?

Walt. Save in mine honour, no.

A form upon the eve of battle came,
Disturb'd my watch, and hoarsely whisper'd me,
"Rowena kiss'd to death her Vortigern!"
Start not! Why, wench, thy bloodless cheek hath ta'en
A copy from the lily's leaf:—
Rowena's nought to thee.

Jud. No—nought to me.

Walt. Less.

And when the morning broke, a British serf
Rush'd breathless in—dost heed? And hiss'd—aye, hiss'd—
That one, I think he told her name. Perhaps,
I have forgot: did treach'rous send the news
Of our great enterprise to Normandy.

Jud. To Normandy!

Walt. What! Echo me? Still pale?

I need not finish this sad story now:
'Tis known before 'tis told, and will have lost
Its freshest colouring. The fiend spake truth. Off!

Jud. In pity, hurl me not from thee; for look
How low thy frown hath beaten me. [*Kneeling.*]

Walt. So weep, and swear it is for love—for joy.
Oh! joy or love well play'd—aye, play'd so well.
Some foolish lookers on might deem it true.

De Gua. [R. c.] What humour's this?

Walt. Oh, Norfolk! could we pry
Beneath the veil that covers o'er the shrine
Of woman's heart, and read its mysteries,
We should read that would make us curse the day
We barter'd happy ignorance for that
We were most bless'd in knowing not.

De Gua. This day's misfortunes have o'er-master'd him.

Jud. Waltheof!

Walt. What had I done? What said? What thought of
thee?

That thou should'st coil and nestle in my breast,
Stealing my genial warmth, till like the snake
O' the fable thou did'st turn and sting me.
I should kill thee—but then the doing on't
Were far too tender for thy punishment.

De Gua. Shame on thy manhood, Waltheof—that it
Should shew its strength in crushing woman's heart!

Walt. Thou boy in love, talk'st thou of womens' hearts—
Learn their full depths, then babble of thy faith!

Jud. Hear me, Waltheof.

Walt. I do, and pray that I were deaf. [*Crosses to L.*]

Ade. Upon my soul she's true.

Walt. She is most true,
Who best knows why. Oh! foolish, foolish heart,
That coveted that gem—the gem now flaw'd!

Jud. No! 'tis not flaw'd—
Thy breath of anger hath but clouded it:
Smile on it, Waltheof—'twill shine again. [*Clinging to him.*]

Walt. Oh, hadst thou stabb'd me, sleeping in thine
arms,

I had awak'd, and dying pardon'd thee;
But country, honour, gone!—thou but a mark
For bitter scorn; and I a bankrupt fool,
Who placed his all within so frail a bark.

Jud. Hear me, hear me! Cast me off—but hear me!

Walt. Was it great love, which is as dangerous
Oft times as hate, o'ershooting its true mark,
And giving death, where it meant happiness!
Or was it that undying, bitter hate,
The Norman heart still bears the Saxon slave?

Jud. Oh! no, no, no!

Walt. No!
It could not be; we have a fair young boy
That bears his father's impress on his face.

Jud. Not more than is that impress on his mother's
heart.

Walt. I do believe thee, Judith, thou hast sinn'd.
That grievously, I cannot wench, forget.

Enter EDRED, R. E. F.

How how?

Edw. The Normans! [*Clashing of arms.*]

Walt. Portcullis down, and drawbridge up.
Now like my native wolf I'm brought to bay,
And brave's the hound would throttle me.

Enter GRANTMESNEL, WARRENE, &c., with Troops, R. C.

A goodly company to grace our halls.
All welcome, good my lords; here is poor cheer
To greet ye with. Some half-score swords, a tear or two.
But, welcome, all; welcome as is grim death
To happy stainless youth. I pray, good wife,
Receive these gentlemen.

Jud. I am, good Sirs,
My husband's echo. Welcome gentlemen.

Grant. [R. C.] Yield, brave Waltheof; the king hath
mercy.

Walt. The mercy that the huntsman shows the stag,
The mountain-cat the hare, man fellow-man.
I stand upon the hearth of all mine ancestors;
Their war-worn banners droop above my head;

I will not yield, nor shame their doings with
A dastard's act. I've fought my way 'gainst odds
A hundred times more great than these.

[*Lays his hand on his sword. De Guader and Judith
interpose between Waltheof and the Normans.*]

Jud. Stand back, ye Norman men. Stand back, I say.
Who strikes at him, must strike the blow through me.
Who strikes at me, but aims his monarch's heart.
I am your master's niece, respect me not,
You throw a sully on your loyalty.
My Waltheof, thou saidst there was a flaw
In my love's gem.

Walt. Let that which you and I
Conferr'd upon be quite forgot.

Jud. With such
Full measure of true love, that bade thee speak
So merciful; such fulness did I give
When I did act.

Walt. Poor wench!

Jud. Not poor, but rich;
Surpassing rich, if coined words, and tears,
Can ransom but thy life, now forfeited.

Grant. [R. c.] De Guader, Earl of Norfolk, in virtue of
My great authority, I arrest thee.

De Gua. I threw and won a treasure of such price,
That I was lured to throw again, and lost.
Here is my plea—there is my sword—I am
Your prisoner. [*Exeunt guarded, followed by Ade., n. c.*]

Walt. So tame give way!
I was not born to yield, to say I am
Your prisoner, to cog, wait 'tendance on
The noblest of you all. Now Surrey, now.
[*They fight; Waltheof's sword breaks; throws the hilt away.*]
Curse on the fickle blade: it broke where all
My father's fortunes broke against this Conqueror.

War. [R.] Where is thy boasted freedom now?

Walt. [*Laying his hand on his heart.*] Here!
Warrenne, thou ever wast mine enemy.
Twice hath my gage been hurl'd down at thy feet,
Twice hath thy sword not dar'd to back the words
Thy tongue dared speak of me as—

War. As what thou wert,
As what thou'st prov'd to be, a traitor.

Walt. Traitor! because I strove to break the bonds
That fretted me. Traitor! Liar. If there's
A name more hideous, take it,—Traitor!

Jud. He is no traitor, Surrey—
Such shame ne'er set its seal upon his brow.

War. What more says Waltheof?

. This much : he stands
to think he could forget himself,
against such galled impotence.
Away with him ! I can afford him words,
as methinks are his only weapons left.
. Or thou'dst not dare to bandy them.

[R.] Away with him.
. How easy 'tis to say,
which would place the stamp of man
Farewell my Judith—oaks bend not.

[Exit, guarded R. C.]

Oh ! torture rack ye all, that ye should come
the spring and summer of our loves,
the goodly promise of its bud.
ould the seas had swallowed all your host,
een spared this mortal agony.

Art thou not Norman ?

No.

No ?

Surrey, no !

was wedded to a Saxon, then
I Saxon too. Go to. Thou'st had
ficking with hearts—with woman's heart,
had'st spared thy tongue such questioning.
ll I to the king ; he hath a heart ;
ch it i' the place where pity dwells.
ack, Lord Surrey !

f. Lord Surrey, hold ! with woman we war not,
e with woman's grief.

Thanks Grantmesnel ;
m'st thou coupled with so false a hound ?
the king, unking-like, scorneth me,
e a match to play, shall out-play him,
e can attach the freedom of
ls, he is a king indeed.

[Exeunt all but War.]

Mine enemy is now within my grasp,
let him slip, I'll brand me fool.
of dead ! Why,—then Judith weds again.
g's my friend : I have the clue to guide
ugh the maze, within whose hidden depths
love—power—wealth, and aye—revenge. [Exit, R. C.]

SCENE III.—Without the Castle.

GURLOIS discovered.

The shadows grow upon the forest glades—
t the time : I never knew her yet to fail :
es—mother.

Enter GUINIVER L.

Guin. No words. Now heed me, boy,
The Norman dame hath but now set her forth
Upon the mission of a wife; all men are fools
And melt at woman's tears. The king, be sure,
Will pardon Waltheof—to make it void,
Must thou creep in upon the Saxon's sleep—
Thou know'st the rest—he hath a naked throat.

Gur. Strike my dagger home: it is not a deed
That words from us should shame to name when bid.
But thus he falls alone.

Guin. I thank thee, boy.
Myself will haunt his couch: his dungeon joins
This massive rock.

Gur. Hast thou that dungeon's key?

Guin. No, boy. I have a key more sure than hand
Of man e'er forg'd. Revenge, which opens rocks,
Splits dungeon doors: melts bars of brass and steel,
And rifles secrets, wedged within the heart.
There's not a foot, within these castles' walls,
I could not tread, though blinded as the mole.
The rat is caged: the weasel sets him free!
To scent more death: to batten on more blood!

Gur. What wilt thou do?

Guin. Why, set him free!

Gur. Free?

Guin. Aye!

If thou wouldst have thine arrow strike the mark,
Wouldst tear the feather off? Waltheof dead,
Before I want him dead, what instrument
Have I?

Gur. Thou'rt right. My task.

Guin. Within an hour, stand a war horse there,
With sword, lance, battle-axe:—a knight will come—
Shall crimson lace his flanks, watch him—dog him:
The issue bring to me. Already hath
The Norman Adela, by aid from Grantmesnel
Set her young husband free.

Gur. I will do thy bidding, mother.

Guin. I know't—Farewell!

Gur. Farewell!

[*Exeunt Guin. L. G.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Dungeon. Waltheof discovered.*

Walt. It is our gift predominant above
The brute, to know that death will put an end
To all life's casualties. And yet there is
Such dread to learn the strange uncertainties

That lie beyond this short abiding place.
 Much fear to learn what is, for what may be,
 Much ling'ring hope on shadows based, yet based
 So strong, that few men care to heave it down.
 In howling waste, where wolves in tireless gallop hunt,
 There's a nook where still a flower blooms ;
 Thus in my heart 'midst all this frantic whirl,
 There nestles hope. Judith ! Judith ! thou art
 That flower, the memory of whose smile
 Will hallow sleep, will smooth this rugged couch.
 [*Lies down to sleep.*]

Enter GUINIVER, disguised as a Saxon Serf, with a torch.

Guin. Awake ! yet, on his brain there settles fast
 The cloud of sleep ; out-shutting from his sense
 Those thoughts, which ever there, would frenzy him.—
 [*Comes forward.*] How still it is—still as a charnel house !
 [*Kneeling over him.*] How calm he sleeps ! I have not known
 such sleep

Since my green youth its race of life began.
 I have not seen a brow so calm, since when
 I cradled on my breast my murder'd boy !
 His pale cheek, cold : his bright hair clot with blood.
 Yes ! I could stab thee now : but then thy brow
 Hath such a peace on it, as his had then.—
 [*Walt. moves.*] Frown not—bend not—or then my dagger's
 point

Must plant my hate ! W'th one quick blow—
 With but my finger's clutch—I could—what do ?
 I'm not so poor in deed—so merciful !
 Away ! [*Throwing the dagger away.*] so kind in act—so
 pitiful.—

As thus to silence him ! He wakes ! [*Kneels.*] My Lord !

Walt. [*Calmly.*] Well !

Guin. [*Aside.*] No start ! he hath a heart, clear as the dew
 That sun light peeps into, and finds no stain.
 Up, and away.

Walt. And who art thou ? How camest here ?

Guin. There is a cavern leading to this cell,
 That with a mouth gapes on the outer world.
 I've heard an aged kinsman speak of it.
 For home and Waltheof, I dared the search—
 Found it. Thou art free.

Walt. To feel once more the cool and bracing air—
 To see the sky—the earth—to mount again
 My gallant horse, and with my lance in rest
 Cry "death to Tyranny !" for this I follow thee ;
 Though grim-eyed death smil'd ghastly from the cave,
 And shouted "Welcome ! Welcome ! Waltheof."

Guin. There lies thy way—'twill bring thee safely forth,
Through foes and guards, outposts and castle walls.
There stands thy steed, with battle-axe and spear—
Why waits my lord?

Walt. Thy name, that when I charge my country's foe,
I may unite it with my battle-cry:

That I may tell to Saxon ears and hearts

What Saxon woman did. Thy name—state—lineage—

Ha! [*Guin. draws back, and suddenly drops her disguise.*]

Guin. My name? 'twas once a queen's! my state? it is
A queen's! my lineage? when these shrunk veins
Were warm with human blood, the channels they
Fed from the crimson fountain of a line of kings!

Walt. Whate'er thou art—or living—breathing—dead—
A cherish'd spirit—or a fiend from hell—

Still, I thank thee. And now will I make sure,

This is no cunning coinage of the brain,

I'll touch thee; though the touch should shrivel me.

Guin. [*Dropping her torch, and retiring.*]

Thrice we've met, and once again,

We shall meet on heath or plain!

When we meet—my work is done—

Saxon! then thy sand hath run.

[*Exit.*]

Walt. And be it so! for be she true, as once
I've proved her true—which bids my reason doubt,
What reason scoffs—I'll gaze upon my fate
As steadfast as an erring mortal may.

—I hear my steed. Oh, gold and amber stars,

That set amid the heaven's sapphire arch,

Look down on me! and when ye see me blench,

Though hell send forth its prophet messengers

To frown me back, and horrors shake my faith,

Then turn to balls of fire, and hot with rage

Flame from your thrones, and strike the coward dead. [*Exit.*]

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A Hall in Edwin's Castle.*

*Enter FITZ-OSBORNE, EDWIN, DE GUADER, FRETHERIC,
MORCAR, R.*

Fitz-Os. [*L.*] How say you, Sirs, he would not pardon him?

De Gua. [*C.*] And when she knelt, and pray'd, and look'd
to him,

As to a god that ruled her destiny,
And her impassion'd eloquence won tears

From soldiers' eyes, he sternly still said—No!—

Edw. [*L. C.*] Till in despair

She left him in his pride, and trembling turn'd
Her woful steps toward her woful home.
Since, Sire, she said, and weeping said it too,
I may not live with him, nor may not tread
My little path of life in his dear company,
I can—and here she rose to majesty—
I can, Sire, die with him. Thus she left him.

Fret. [R. C.] And then the king, as moved by her last words,
Repented, and with a deep sigh that shook
His iron frame, he swore to pardon all.
We pardon them, said he, and we shall sleep
This night the better for the doing on't.
And forthwith he despatch'd a messenger——

Mor. Who, falling in with Edwin on the road,
To him gave up the priceless document.

Edw. And he who first shall bear this tale of life
To him, who living, so deserves to live,
Shall merit most my love and gratitude.
Who shall but breathe my steed in this great race,
Shall win a thousand crowns; whose horse's heels
Shall spurn the clay upon my charger's chest,
A thousand crowns, a hide of fertile land.
Away! a welcome gift is ne'er too early sent.

[*Shouts without of Waltheof! Waltheof!*]

Fret. Ha!

Edw. The lion hath burst his bonds.
Oh, dire mischance!

Enter WALTHEOF, L.

Walt. [*Crosses to table.*] Spare me speech. A cup of wine.

[*Drinks.*] My spirit
Had nigh fled. I had not, Edwin, deem'd
Thy wine so choice. Methinks, good friends, your lips
And hands should wear a kinder welcoming.
Am not I free?

Edw. [*Giving the pardon.*] The king hath pardon'd thee.

Walt. Impossible!

No human heart is there so large that it
Hath room for mercy's seed to spring beside
Such justly ripen'd hate. Oh! speak again,
And say you did but jest; you did but try
My soul's firm constancy. The damning truth
Would make me touch the base of all my grief.

De Gua. Why, this is most ungracious, Waltheof.
The king is noble.

Walt. Aye, push home the barb.
I will not take this paltry gift of life,
Which in the taking will dishonour me.
I vow'd myself to right my country's wrongs.

To break this vow because my life 's at stake,
Would bring hell's curse upon the renegade.

De Gua. Bethink you well.

Our fortunes desperate, our honour pluck'd,
And we are reared again to pristine form
By this most king-like pardoning.

Fitz-Os. Yes, he hath pardoned *us*.

Walt. *Us!* Pardoned *us!*

Hath pardoned *us!* Whip me with jester's scoffs,
That e'er I gave you right to babble us!
He hath forgiven you, his lacqueys, slaves,
The rich fed stomachs of his lofty state,
That turn'd rebellious, when his hand refused
Some dainty morsel that they coveted.
Oh, I could tear my flesh to think that I
Could mate myself with such state weathercocks!
Us!——

De Gua. But he hath power, friends, and abler still,
That sinew, gold. Upon the southern shore
A navy rides—the north by Chester's held.

Fitz-Os. The west, De Gilbert, with his lances, guard.
While William with a power infinite
Holds all around in fee.

Walt. Gods, give me patience!

De Gua. You will not brave his puissance, Waltheof.

Walt. Will not! I will, though he were fenc'd around
With all his chivalry! Will not!

You urged me on to dare with ye the end
Of this most bold emprise. I knew it then—
You loved not me—cared not for liberty.
Where is your blood? it mounts not to your cheeks
With very shame! hath fear all frozen it?—
Go to! Go to! I've seen a moorside goose,
More bravely cackle. Oh, away with you! [*Crosses to L.*]

Fitz-Os. You wrong us, Waltheof; on my soul you do!
What brings us here but love; what holds our love,
But knowing you are worthy of that love.

De Gua. We sought thee,
And knowing that, would save your noble life:
Accept the gift, it were but policy.

Walt. That policy again: you said 'twas policy
That made him kind to me—'tis policy
Say you, would bid me bend to him,—
Away with policy—I'll none of it;
'Twas made for priests, court foxes, cardinals,
*And not for gentlemen!**

* The lines printed in *italics* are omitted by order of the
Licencer of Plays.

Fitz-Os. I will no further in this matter.

Walt. I knew 'twas so—did I not say 'twas so ?
Off, off ! ye icicles, that melt before
The sun of state ! I am well rid of ye !
And now I stand alone !

Fre. [*Crosses to c.*] No ! Not alone while life's in me, or
while
One blush of shame shall tinge a Saxon cheek.

Mor. [*Crosses to c.*] Here is my naked breast, and here
my blade ;

If thou should'st find hid there so foul a thought,
Then pluck it out, and shame me with its sight.

Edw. When Waltheof said alone, he meant that he
And I were one—'twas thus he thought, therefore
Spake " alone."

Walt. Thanks ! thanks ! Oh, never let me hear again,
This selfish world knows not unselfish friends,
For I can give the lie to it, as all
Men can who with themselves deal honestly.

De Gua. [*To Edw.*] You will not aid him in the desperate
cause ?

Edw. And think ye thanks from him are nothing worth ?
Go place ye honours, wealth, within the scale
Against the thanks from out a noble heart,
See which with Edwin weigh the heaviest.

Walt. Now to your king—this noble Conqueror—
For great he is ; and tell him thus :—That I
For goodness, gifts, which he hath heap'd on me,
Do thank him with a heart that hath no tongue
Its thanks to speak. And tell him Normans, this—
That while I prize, and love, and honour him,
Still for my country dare to be his foe.
And be assured,

Were William Waltheof, then would he act
As Waltheof does, now William is the king !

De Gua. Thy wife !

Walt. You bade me think on Brutus, not three suns ago !

De Gua. I pray you think of this.

Walt. And so I do, and act upon the thought.

Fitz-Os. He is right royal.

Walt. I know it ; therefore
His equal make thyself by fronting him.

De Gua. Lost ! lost ! Oh ! Edwin, aid me, never see
So brave a swimmer drown'd, because no rope
Is thrown to him.

Edw. Better drown'd than be dishonour'd.

Walt. It is thy wife speaks, man. Thou wouldst have
sworn :—

I sav'd thy soul from perjury. Thank me,

And let me see the last of thee. Now, Fretheric
 To Huntingdon!—upon the spur, I ride.
 This pardon here, I'll use as policy—
 I thank ye for that word—'twill rid my home
 Of vermin! bane the rats!
 Oh! yes, I'll be so politic—that ye
 Shall stare on me:—Come! 'tis your country calls—
 Shouts out for policy—and I will be—
 Oh! yes, so very politic! [*Rushes out, followed by Edw.*
Fre. and Mor.]

De Gua. After him—we yet may save him. He is
 Too brave a heart to be thus lost for want
 Of friends to prompt him on to good. Come. [*Exeunt, L.*]

SCENE II.—*A wild Wood.*

Enter GUINIVER and GURLOIS, R

Guin. You left him there?

Gur. Within the castle walls.

Guin. I've seen thee, Gurlois, when the stanches
 hound

Hath near'd the antler'd stag, outleap that hound,
 And plant thy knife, e're yet his greedy fangs
 Had torn the bursting throat. I've seen thee tire
 The slotting wolf, and grapple him to death.
 Then mark me, boy, thou must outdo thyself—
 Must match thyself against thyself—and fleet
 As arrow fleeing from the bow, seek Waltheof.
 'Tis as I said—the king hath pardon'd him.

Gur. Pardon'd him!

Guin. If he accept the gift,
 The which I doubt; but still he may: we lose
 Revenge.

Gur. And I?

Guin. Take thou this packet, boy;
 It bears the seal of his approved friend,
 That poor toy, Atheling. I stole his ring
 Some summers since—I thought its use would come.
 Seek out the path that horses never trod,
 From here to there, the broad-wing'd falcon's flight.
 Nor veer nor right nor left, but place thine eye
 Upon yon hill, thy better foot before.
 If waters front thee, swim: if foemen, strike.
 Will knows no obstacle, save to o'ercome.
 Deliver this—no matter how or where,
 At banquet—night or day—it must be done.

Gur. It shall. [*Crosses to L.*] Mother!

Guin. Son.

Gur. Canst tell me, mother—[*Pauses, affected.*]

Guin. My boy !

Gur. If thou wilt ever sit again beneath
The Druid oak, and tell me wondrous tales
Of British worth, ere Pict or Roman came.
Shall I, mother, ever do thy will again ?

Guin. Boy ! Boy !

Gur. That tells me, no ! Farewell, dear woods,
Wild hills, glad streams, bright sun, and happy birds.
Farewell, my mother, we shall meet again,
Where Saxon, Norman, never can oppress.
[*Kneels.*] Bless me, mother.

Guin. Bless thee ! bless thee, boy !

Thy rude, untutor'd heart, led on by me,
Hath seldom felt the gladness of this life.
If thou hast err'd be then the blame on by me.
If thou hast sinn'd, oh ! let me bear the lash.
Thou wilt be pitied in thine ignorance.
There, [*Kisses him*] the first for years—the last for ever.
Now go. [*He starts up, looks on his mother.*]

Gur. [*Passionately.*] Mother ! [*Exit, L.*]

Guin. 'Twas well he went. I could not look on him
With tearless eye. And who shall boast he saw,
Guiniver weep ? Yet weep I must. Well ! well,
But it shall be to stocks, and stones, and trees,
And sightless herbs, which bend their petals 'fore
The blazing sun ! Let nature hear the sob,
A mother heaves for her first-born—her son.
The fox, the wolf, the very mountain cat,
Weep for their ravish'd young, not knowing death,
But separation : shall I prove that I
Am brutish more than they ? No ! no ! no ! [*weeps.*]
My rough wood-boy ! the last of all that race
Of red-blood kings, who govern'd nations.
His father was broad-stamp'd upon his brow
When I did kiss him. Oh ! it shook me then.
But now ! I am a queen again. Revenge !
Dry up these tears, and scorch from out my heart,
All—all, save that which fiercest vengeance breeds. [*Exit, R.*]

SCENE III.—*Hall in the Castle of Waltheof.*

Enter WARRENNE, GRANTMESNIL, and others, GAOLER, R.C.

War. Fled ! Waltheof fled : and yet the door
Fast lock'd : the bolts undrawn : the bars unscathed :
And thou no hand in it. I tell thee, slave,
Thine every limb shall stretch unto the point
Of cracking, if — [*Jud. rushing in, L.*]

Jud. [*L.*] My husband ! Warrenne.

War. [c.] Ask thou of yon pale slave.

Jud. Oh! rather ask thine own dark ruthless heart,
Thou man of crime: I charge thee on thy soul
To tell to me, who hath most right to ask,
Where is my Waltheof?

Grant. [R.] Pray patience, Lady.

Jud. Oh! nameless villany! Thou shalt account to me,
for every hair. I will not bate thee one,
For every pulse of life, that would have beat,
'Twixt now and ripest age—for every word
Of love, command, authority—that he
Had spoken, had he outlived thy coward hate.
My husband! my husband!

War. Thy husband hath escaped.

Jud. To heaven!

War. Fled.

Jud. 'Tis false! canst thou, Grantmesnel, stand there,
A noble knight, with sword and golden spur,
And cleave me not that villain to the core.
Give me thy brand: yet no—I'll stain it not
With blood, that would corrode, and shame, and rust.
[Weeps.] Tears! rivers then, to choke the breath from out
That dastard's throat.
[Plucks a hair from her head.] Here is a cord to hang thee
with. Go forth
And twist it round a ray that cleaves the air,
And it will strangle thee.

War. [Taking *Jud.* by the wrist.] Woman!

Jud. Man! unhand me. [Shouting without.] Ha!

Enter WALTHEOF.

Wal. [Striking *War.* from his wife.] Off, hound! My
Judith!

War. The hound hath yet a fang. [Exit, R. c.]

Jud. Speak! Speak, to me. [Faints.]

Walt. Oh! smile. Great ill hath crush'd thee not,
Shall good, then, murder thee? And yet 'tis so.
What! Judith,—girl.

Jud. Yes! yes.

Walt. That's well! That's brave.

Jud. Brave, very brave!
Forgive me that I weep.

Enter WARRENNE and troops, R. C.

War. Seize the traitor.

[Soldiers advance, *Walt.* produces the pardon, they all retire.]
How now? some mystic scroll—some jugglery.
Perdition! A pardon from the king!

Walt. [To War.] How very mystic is the scroll.
 Why start ye back? Brave men, there are no swords,
 No lance-heads here. I had not known before,
 That parchment, with a scratch of ink on it,
 Could fright back arm'd men. Fear not, dear love;
 These wasps have sheath'd their stings: the name of king,
 Like to a honeycomb, hath charm'd their buzzing rage.

Grant. And so the king hath, king-like, pardon'd thee?
 Now, on mine honour, I am glad of it.

Walt. Withdraw your troops then from our castle walls;
 And such good cheer and heartfelt courtesy
 As knight may shew to knight, will I to thee.

[*Grant. and troops exeunt.*]

[*Aside.*] That's policy. To thee, Lord Surrey,
 On horseback, foot, sword, lance or battle-axe—
 In tourney ground, or in my castle-yard—
 I'll meet with thee; think well on't. Refuse—
 I will proclaim thee, lord, as coward, knave!
 Through every court and land in Christendom!

War. Take back each threat for threat—each word for word—

A Norman noble wastes on Saxon churl
 No further thought—and masters meet not slaves. [*Exit, R. c.*]

Walt. [Looking after him.] Fool!

Jud. And he hath pardon'd thee; how more than man's a king.

Who, justly anger'd, like a god forgives.
 There seems again a light within the sun—

Enter GURLOIS, breathless and disguised. Gives Walt. the packet.

Pray saints here comes no cloud.

Gur. Read.

Walt. From whence art thou?

Gur. Read.

Walt. Ha! the seal of Atheling.

[*Unfolds the packet. Sees a dagger.*]

Jud. What is't has ta'en
 The colour from thy cheek?

Walt. Whence comest thou?

Gur. From Atheling.

[*Exit, R. c.*]

Walt. [Shewing the dagger.] This little toy should tell
 Of some new sport, that it alone can play.

Read, my Judith; for there may cluster words
 Which worse than this poor knife, would murder me.

Jud. [Reading.] "Thou art pardoned." That's good,
 twice told. "But the revengful king, now dooms thee for a
 darker fate than death."

Walt. Read on—this joy will overthrow reason.

Jud. Joy!

Walt. Read on.

Jud. [*Reading.*] "Thou wilt be dragged to Normandy, to be the gaze, as thou hast been before, of Norman crowds."

Walt. [*Exultingly.*] Now, William, now! thou art mine enemy!

Go on.

Jud. [*Reading.*] "This pardoning is but a lure; beware the poison that lies hid beneath. **ATHELING.**"

Walt. I did defy him, ere I knew of this.

Jud. What meanest thou?

Walt. That I am nobler than

This Conqueror. I hurl'd his pardon back:

Disdain'd to bow: but then my heart was fill'd

With sense of deep-dyed black ingratitude.

My sword was lead—my lance a winter-rush!

Mine arm was impotent. I feel again

The glow of manhood come; my blood flows on,

In quicker, madder course! The debt I owed

Is paid. Once more I'm free; and Waltheof

Is Waltheof again!

[*Crosses to L.*]

Jud. And I am lost. I saw my happiness, Snatch'd at it, fell.

Walt. To Normandy!

[*Crosses to L.*]

Jud. Thou'lt spare thyself this great indignity.

Walt. Or let me merit all their scoffs in Normandy.

I can remember, Judith, when a boy,

I robb'd a wolf of all her suckling brood.

Her eye had such a fire within its orb

As glares within thine now. What, ho!

Enter EDRED.

Sound forth my challenge from the battlements.

Our castle's strong; we will defy the king.

My armour shall be hack'd from off my limbs,

My sword and lance both shattered to the grasp,

Ere I will yield. [*Sound of trumpets.*] These hounds may bay them hoarse,

With thee and honour left, I have two citadels

That shall not fall while life can hold it out. [*Exeunt, R. to C.*]

SCENE IV.—*Hall in the Castle of Waltheof. Noise of Fighting. Many retainers rush across the Stage, R. to L.*

Enter EGBERT, followed by EDRED and Troops, R.

Egb. To the eastern walls. How goes the day?

Edr. At present well. Our noble Waltheof Hath beaten back now thrice the enemy.

Egb. I hear his shout. On, on, my gallant braves.

save not our noble chief the sole renown.

[*Shouts.*]

lark!

Edr. On!

Egb. Waltheof or victory!

[*Exeunt. Noise of fighting still continues, L. U. E.*]

Enter GUINIVER, followed by WARRENE and TROOPS, from a Portal in E. of the Scene. SOLDIERS pass off, R. S. E.

Guin. Now tread as light, as though 'twere brittle ice,
beneath it floods, that plummet never reach'd—
The castle's thine, thy foe's within thy grasp.

War. And thy reward?

Guin. [*Laughing.*] Reward! Cleft heads and bleeding trunks.
Reward! Back! back! here is thine enemy.
Beware! no twenty swords can match his blade,
Then wielded by his strong and desp'rate arm.

[*Guin. War., and Troops withdraw.*]

Enter GURLOIS, who goes to his mother, then WALTHEOF, his armour hacked, his plume gone, followed by EDBED and OFFICER, R. S. E.

Walt. Hurl down the traitor from the battlements
Who talks of yielding. Let his craven heart
Be food for dogs. While stone shall rest on stone
Plant my banner on its topmost height.
Here most the foe press on their fierce assault
Lead thou the bowmen. Win, and wear thy spurs; [*Alarms.*]
Dost thou, then never let me see thy face again. [*Exit Edr.*]

EGBERT rushes in.

Weak, old man. Nay, totter not, the while my arm
Is left to aid thee with.

Egb. The castle's fired. [*Walt. staggers, and Egb. falls.*]

Walt. Oh! would that thus were Waltheof. Egbert!

Egb. 'Tis fit that Egbert die, now Waltheof

Has nothing left for him—to linger—for:

Thine hand—good—master!

[*Kisses it and dies.*]

Guin. [*To War.*] Now! now!

[*War. and Troops rush forward.*]

Walt. Traitors!

War. We have met again. Yield!

Walt. For so would'st thou, or any fool, who set
His life above his honesty. Stand back!

Give way! [*Attacks them; Guin. and Gur. watching and exulting.*]

JUDITH rushes in, followed by three retainers, and receives a blow that was aimed at Walt. by War.

Jud. That's nobly done!

[*Shouts and alarms, continued, and the effects of the fire seen through the loopholes, &c. of the Fortress.*]

Walt. [*Killing War.*] Hell's tortures grapple thee.

[*Soldiers take out the body of Warr. and*

Jud. I've saved thee, Waltheof: the Norman wife Hath proved her Saxon love, and set her seal on it.

Walt. My heart is stone, or it had been crack'd at this

Jud. Once more say Judith: it remembers me Of when, your smile first taught me that you lov'd.

It brings a gush of pleasant thoughts, that like To angels glad my happy, happy, brain!

I hear thee whisper me, as thou didst when

I crown'd this noble brow at Pevensey——

Once more——

Walt. My Judith!

Jud. That's music fit to die upon!

'Tis dark—you light me not. Then is death nigh

Indeed! Kiss me Waltheof! You know a kiss

Was ever my reward. Raise me.—That's well!

So!—closer still:—closer—now can I die,

Most like a flower, on my stem. [*Noise without of fight*

Edw. [*Without.*] Waltheof! To the rescue! Walt

[*Shouts with*

Jud. [*Raising herself.*] 'Tis Edwin! Live; Live! [*I*

Gur. [*To Guin.*] Away!

Guin. What! start the raven from the carrion?

Fly! not gone? Boy, I do command thee hence.

[*Exit Gur.*

[*The noise of battle increases. The doors are burst open. Normans are beaten in by Edwin, Fretheric, and M.*

Walt. takes no notice.]

Enter EDRED, bounding forward.

Edr. 'Tis won! 'tis—— [*Draws back with horror*

Edw. [*Kneeling down.*] My Waltheof.

Fre. My friend.

Mor. My countryman.

Guin. [*Coming forward.*] Saxon!

Walt. [*Starting up.*] Again! thou bitter, bitter air; creep'st

Into my blood. What horror now? Hast come

To gaze on what would make thy sister fiends

To weep. [*To Edw.*] Dost see her?

Edw. Yes.

Walt. Then, is she not—air? [*Rushes towards and stabs*
I—I—did think to strike at nothing!

Guin. Thou hast struck less.

Enter GUILAIS in chains, L. 1st E.

My boy! my boy. The shaft has but recoil'd.

Fre. Away with him to tortures, racks!

Gur. Peace! peace. [*Points to his mother.*]

Canst find me out a sharper pain than that?

Mother! mother! Look there. [*Points to Walt. and Jud. laugh exultingly. Exit, L. U. E. guarded.*]

Walt. Ask, ask, that woman, why? why?

Guin. Thy father's father, slew my father's sire,
My father's daughter hath not lived in vain.

Edw. Thou worse than fiend.

Guin. [*Taking Edw. by the arm.*] Look forth, beyond that
blinding cloud of smoke,

Are hills and dales, broad woods and silver streams,
These all were once the Briton's heritage.

I told thee why I doubly hated him,

For her—her father slew my youngest boy!

These were my wrongs, and here is my revenge.

Mine! mine! the poor, despis'd, scorned British slave,

and now I ask my soul, repentest thou?

It answers, No. Death is on me; what then?

To thou to life, thou art more curs'd than I.

I will not leave my body to be made

The mark of scorn: I am a queen, and like

A queen will have a queen-like burial. [*Staggering up the steps.*]

Within this burning wreck, which I have made,

Taint by Saxon hands, I find a grave. [*Leaps on ruins.*]

Down, down, ye blazing ruins, perish all:

Life, body ——— [*The ruins fall in with her.*]

Walt. And now what have I left to linger for?

Edw. What linger for?

Friends! Fatherland. Up, up, thou noble heart,

The king's thy friend, thy direst foe is slain,

and we, thy lovers, countrymen, stand round

A belt of hearts to do, or die for thee.

Walt. I have no wife!

Edw. Thou hast a country: hast forgotten it?

Walt. Curse on the day when I remember'd it.

[My wife! she was my friend, my country—all:

had nor hope, nor dream, nor thought, but she

Made it more bright, more pure, more beautiful.

O aim of glory, fame, but 'twas for her.

It was the root from whence my glory sprang:

The stem round which it twined. The leaf—oh, God,

Dead! Dead! Dead.

Fer. Be a man.

Walt. I am a man!

And prove my manhood most, by weeping o'er

A woman I have loved and lost.

Or wench! that bosom, whose soft white had made

White bolted snow seem black: down, granite stone!

Where I have laid so oft my happy head,
 And bless'd the pillow that so cushion'd me.
 To think that I—I—oh! wretched, wretched, man!
 Have thrust foul death upon that perfumed nest,
 And made its shrine a sheath for cold, cold steel.

Edw. [*Aside.*] Be comforted.

Walt. Talk not to me; this is the sabbath of
 My grief; and I would keep it holy;

Fre. [*To Edw.*] What devil's hand was it that murder'd
 her?

Walt. [*Springing up.*] I slew him, Fretheric! I slew the
 fiend!

Whose steel unhallowed reach'd that angel's life!
 I slew him! Slew him, Judith. What recompense?
 Now, Normans, now! the grisly form of death
 Smiles from your weapons daring me to leap—
 There in my heart that maddens for the dare!

[*Snatches a sword from one of the Soldiers.*]

In war's grim front this arm shall flame no more—

It ne'er shall strike again—save thus:—

[*Stabs himself.*]

And ne'er before did it strike half so true!

[*Falls.*]

Edw. Was that well done?

Walt. If not well done, it was at least well meant—

Is't no temptation, Edwin, think ye now,

To join her once again? To hear, see, touch

This rare and exquisite perfection?

Sweet wife! there's room on death's cold couch for both!

And now I would not be a demigod!

[*Kisses her.*]

Honey, Edwin, honey—'twas honey to the last!

Judith!

[*Dies.*]

Curtain falls.

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